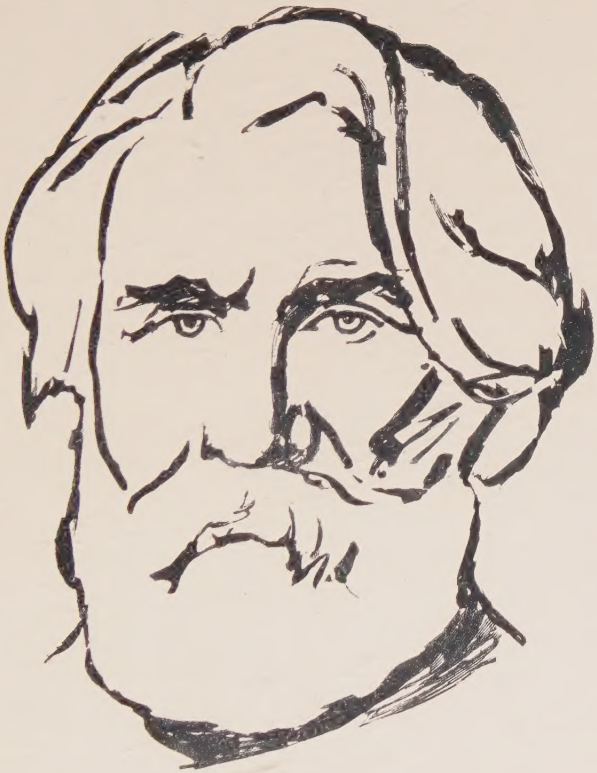
IVAN TURGENEV
ON THE EVE

I knew him intimately during some fifteen years. I have visited him at Baden and Paris and Bougival; I spent ten days with him in 1870 at his country-house in Russia, and I have been with him on several occasions at different places in England; and everywhere and at all times I found him exactly the same, the most charming of companions, the kindest and most modest of men. During all the time that I knew him I never heard him utter a word in which the slightest shade could be detected of anything like jealousy or conceit. No one could be more ready than he always was to recognize and foster rising and struggling genius, to appreciate and enjoy the merits of those among his rivals, living as well as departed, who had achieved success.

W.R.S. Ralston



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ТУРГЕНЕВ

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IVAN TURGENEV

ON THE EVE

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I

One hot summer day in 1853, two young men lay in the shade of a tall lime-tree by the River Moskva, not far from Kountsovo. One of them, a tall, swarthy man of about twenty-three, with a pointed and somewhat crooked nose and a high forehead, lay on his back, peering pensively into the distance with slightly narrowed small grey eyes, a restrained smile on his broad lips. The other lay on his stomach, likewise peer-

ing into the distance, his fair curly head propped up on his hands. He was three years older than his friend but looked much younger with his barely sprouting moustache and the light fuzz on his chin. There was something charmingly childish, something attractively delicate, in the small features of his fresh round face, in his honeyed brown eyes, well-shaped, full lips, and white hands. His whole being breathed the happy exuberance of health and the charm of youth—carefree, self-sufficient, and pampered. And he shifted his eyes languorously, smiled, or propped up his head like a boy who knows people like to look at him. He wore a loose white dust-coat, and a blue kerchief was tied round his slender neck; a crumpled straw hat lay on the grass near him.

His friend seemed old beside him, and there was nothing in his angular form to suggest that he, too, was enjoying himself. He lay in an awkward posture; his large head, tapering downwards, was set awkwardly on a long neck; the impression of awkwardness was enhanced by the position of his arms, his trunk, clad in a close-fitting, short black frock-coat, and his spindly legs with the upraised knees that were like the hind legs of a grasshopper. For all that he was unmistakably a well-bred man; "good breeding" stamped his entire clumsy personality, and his face, plain and, indeed, rather droll, bespoke a kindly disposition and the habit of thinking. His name was Andrei Petrovich Bersenev; his fair-haired friend was Pavel Yakovlevich Shubin.

"Why don't you lie on your stomach like me?" Shubin began. "It is so much better. Especially when you lift your feet and knock your heels together—like this. You have the grass under your very nose, and when you're tired of staring at the scenery you can look at some pot-bellied beetle crawling up a blade of grass, or at the ever-busy ant. It's better, I assure you, than the pseudo-classical attitude you've taken, for all the world like a ballet

dancer leaning against a cardboard cliff. Just tell yourself you have a perfect right to rest now. It certainly is no trifling matter to have come out third! Take a rest, sir; stop exerting yourself—relax!"

Shubin delivered this address through his nose, in the languid, half-joking tone of a spoilt child talking to family friends who bring him sweets. Getting no reply, he continued:

"What strikes me most in ants, beetles, and other gentlemen of the insect race is their astonishing gravity. They scurry up and down looking as important as if their lives meant something too. Here is man—the lord of creation, a superior being—gazing at them, and they don't care a straw; what's more, some midge is as likely as not to settle on the nose of the lord of creation and start feeding on it. That's humiliating. And yet, come to think of it, why should we look down on them? Why shouldn't they put on airs since we do so? Come on, philosopher, solve that problem for me! Well, why don't you answer me? Eh?"

"What did you say?" said Bersenev, stirring.

"What did I say!" echoed Shubin. "Your friend here is setting forth profound ideas, and you aren't even listening."

"I was admiring the view. Look how warmly those fields shimmer in the sun."

Bersenev spoke with a slight lisp.

"The colours are grand, to be sure," said Shubin. "Nature in her best outfit."

Bersenev shook his head.

"You ought to admire these things more than I do. It's in your line, you're an artist."

"No, sir, it isn't," replied Shubin, putting his hat on the back of his head. "I deal in flesh; my business is to model shoulders, legs, arms; and this has no shape, it's not complete—it straggles all over the place. There's no catching it!"

"But there's beauty in it, too," remarked Bersenev. "By the way, have you finished your bas-relief?"

"Which one?"

"The one with the child and the goat."

"It can go hang! It can go hang!" cried Shubin in a singsong. "I had a look at some real stuff by the old men, at some antiques, and smashed up my bungle. You say as you point to the landscape, 'There's beauty in it, too.' There is beauty in everything, no doubt, even in your nose, but you cannot possibly chase after everything that's beautiful. The ancients didn't have to chase after beauty, it simply came into their creations from God knows where—the heavens, perhaps. The whole world was theirs, but we cannot encompass it—we are too puny. We cast our fishing-line at some little point and watch it. Lucky if we get a bite, and if we don't—"

Shubin put out his tongue.

"Wait a moment," Bersenev broke in. "That's a paradox. If you don't feel beauty, if you don't admire it wherever you come across it, it will escape you in your art as well. Unless a beautiful view, or beautiful music, conveys a message to your heart, that is, unless you feel it—"

"You poor feeler!" Shubin cut in, and laughed at the word, while Bersenev fell to musing. "Of course," Shubin went on. "You are clever, you're a philosopher, a graduate of Moscow University, and it's terribly hard to argue with you, particularly for a half-baked physician like me. But let me tell you that, besides my art, I only love beauty in women, in girls, and even that didn't come until recently."

He rolled over on his back and pillowed his head on his hands.

For a few moments neither spoke. The stillness of noonday heat hung over the drowsing sunlit earth.

"Speaking of women," Shubin began afresh, "why doesn't somebody take Stakhov in hand? Did you see him in Moscow?"

"No."

"The old man's gone stark mad. He hangs around his Augustina Christianovna all day long, though he's bored to death. They just sit staring at each other—it is so stupid! Disgusting, in fact. But there you are. The Lord has blessed that man with a wonderful family, but he must have his Augustina Christianovna! I've never seen anything more repulsive than her goose face. I modelled a caricature of her the other day, in the style of Dantin. It isn't bad at all. I'll show it to you."

"What about Yelena Nikolayevna's bust—any progress?" asked Bersenev.

"No. Her face is maddening. Those features are so pure and clear-cut and regular that at first sight they seem quite easy to render. But you simply can't grasp them. The similarity eludes you like a buried treasure. Have you noticed how she listens? Not a line shifts in her face; it's only the look in her eyes that keeps changing, and seems to change her whole figure. What do you expect a sculptor to do about it, and a poor one, too? She's an amazing creature— A strange creature," he added after a brief pause.

"Yes, she is an amazing girl," Bersenev agreed.

"And yet she is Stakhov's daughter. Talk about heredity or race. The funny thing is that anyone can see she's his daughter; she's like him and she's also like her mother, Anna Vasilyevna. I esteem Anna Vasilyevna most sincerely, she is my benefactress; but God knows she's a ninny. Where could Yelena have got that spirit from? Who kindled that flame? There's another nut for you to crack, philosopher!"

But once again the "philosopher" made no reply. Verbosity was not his main fault, and when he did talk he

expressed himself awkwardly and falteringly, with much unnecessary waving of his arms; moreover, a particular quietude had descended upon his soul this time, a quietude akin to weariness and melancholy. He had moved out of town a short while before, after completing a long, strenuous work that had taken up many hours of his time daily. Miscellaneous but strangely related impressions—inaction, blissful repose and pure air, the consciousness of a goal attained, whimsical and casual conversation with his friend, the image of a dear being suddenly called up—merged within him in a general feeling which at once soothed, excited, and enervated him. He was a very sensitive young man.

It was cool and peaceful under the lime-tree. Flies and bees seemed to hum more softly as they flew into its shade. The clean, low grass, emerald-green without a touch of gold, did not stir—the tall stems thrust up motionless, as though spellbound. Yellow blossoms hung from the lower branches of the tree in small lifeless clusters. With every breath a sweet scent forced its way deep into the lungs, but they drew it in eagerly. The distance beyond the river, to the very horizon, was all shimmering and glowing; an occasional puff of wind would break up the shimmer, making it all the more intense; a radiant haze billowed above the earth. The birds were hushed—they never sing when it is hot—but the grasshoppers chirped all around, and it was pleasant to loll in the cool shade, listening to that throbbing sound of life that brought on sleepiness and invited reverie.

"Have you ever noticed," Bersenev began suddenly, gesticulating as he spoke, "what a peculiar feeling Nature arouses in us? She is so full, so obvious—so self-satisfied, I mean—and we realize that and admire it. On the other hand, she always arouses, in me at least, a certain uneasiness, a certain anxiety, even sadness. Why is that? Perhaps when we stand before her we become

more conscious of how utterly imperfect, how vague we are, or is it because that which satisfies her is not enough for us, while she cannot offer us what we need?"

"Well," replied Shubin, "I will tell you, Andrei Petrovich, where all that comes from. You have just described the sensations of a lonely man who does not live but merely looks on and goes into raptures. Why look on? Live yourself, and then you'll be all right. You may knock at Nature's door as long as you like, she'll never give you an answer you can understand, because she's inarticulate. She will ring and twang like a taut string, but you mustn't expect her to sing a song. It is a live soul that responds, especially a woman. That being so, my noble friend, I advise you to get yourself a companion of the heart, and then all your melancholy sensations will disappear at once. That is what we 'need,' as you say. After all, this anxiety and sadness is just a kind of hunger. Give your stomach real food, and straight away everything will be fine. Take your allotted position in space, my friend—be a solid body. And then, what is Nature, what is she for? Just listen: love—what a powerful, fiery word! Nature—what a chilly schoolroom term! Hence, *long live Maria Petrovna*!" chanted Shubin, "or rather not Maria Petrovna," he added, "but—oh, well, what does it matter? *Vous me comprenez.*"

Bersenev raised himself up and leant his chin in his cupped hands.

"Must you sneer?" he said, without looking at his friend. "Must you mock? Yes, you are right, love *is* a great word, it's a great feeling. But what love do *you* mean?"

Shubin raised himself up in his turn.

"What love I mean? Any you like, as long as it's love. Frankly, I don't think there are different kinds of love. If you love—"

"With all your heart," Bersenev put in.

"That goes without saying—the heart isn't an apple to be divided. If you love you are right. I didn't dream of mocking. My heart is now so full of tenderness, so soft! I was only trying to explain why Nature affects us the way you say she does. It's because she calls forth in us a need for love which she cannot satisfy. She gently urges us on into a different embrace, the embrace of warm arms, but we don't understand her, and we expect something from herself. Ah, Andrei, it is so wonderful—this sun and this sky and everything else around us—and yet you feel sad. But if at this moment you held in your hand the hand of a woman you loved, if that hand and that woman were all yours, if you were to see things through *her* eyes and feel them through *her* feelings and not your own, then Nature would not arouse sadness or anxiety in you, and you wouldn't notice Nature's beauty; she would herself rejoice, and sing your own hymn, because you would have endowed her, the dumb one, with a tongue!"

Shubin sprang up and paced to and fro once or twice, while Bersenev bowed his head, a faint colour suffusing his face.

"I cannot quite agree with you," he said. "Nature doesn't always suggest—er—love. She also threatens us; she reminds us of terrible—of inscrutable mysteries. Is it not our fate to be engulfed by Nature? Isn't she engulfing us continually? Nature is both life and death; and death is as vocal in her as life."

"There is life and death in love too," Shubin interjected.

"And then," Bersenev continued, "when I stand in a wood, in a green thicket, in spring, and fancy I hear the romantic sound of Oberon's horn"—Bersenev felt a little ashamed as he uttered these words—"isn't that—?"

"Just a craving for love, a craving for happiness, that's all," said Shubin. "Don't I know those sounds, and the tender emotion and expectancy that come into one's soul

in the shelter of the forest, in its depths, or in open country at nightfall, when the sun has set and there's a mist over the river! But from the forest and the river and the earth and the sky, and from every little cloud and every blade of grass, I expect and want to get happiness; I feel it coming and hear its call in everything. *My god is radiant and jovial!* That was how I began a poem. You'll admit it's a splendid first line; but I couldn't make up a second, much as I tried. Happiness! We want happiness while we're young, while we have command of our faculties, while we are on the rise, not on the decline. Confound it!" he went on, with sudden passion. "We are young, we're neither ugly nor stupid, and we shall win happiness!"

He tossed his curly head and glanced at the sky with a self-confident, all but defiant, air. Bersenev looked up at him.

"As if there were nothing more important than happiness," he said softly.

"Such as what?" asked Shubin.

"Well, here are you and I, both of us young, as you say, and let us assume not too bad; each of us wants to be happy. But is that 'happiness' a word which could bring the two of us together and fire us with one flame, which could make us join hands? Isn't it a selfish word—I mean one that divides rather than unites?"

"Do you know any words that unite people?"

"Yes, plenty of them. You know them, too."

"Do I? What words are those?"

"Take art for one, because you are an artist, homeland, science, freedom, justice."

"What about love?" asked Shubin.

"Love, too, is a word that unites, but not the kind of love you crave for now—not love as enjoyment but love as sacrifice."

Shubin frowned.

"That's all right for the Germans. I want to love for my own sake; I want to be Number One."

"Number One?" repeated Bersenev. "But *I* think the sole purpose of our lives is to put ourselves in the second place."

"If everyone were to do as you say," Shubin muttered, with a plaintive grimace, "nobody on earth would ever eat pineapples, because all would be giving them away to others."

"That could only mean there was no need for pineapples. However, you may rest assured that there would always be those who would even snatch away other people's bread."

For a while the two friends said no more.

"I met Insarov again the other day," Bersenev began. "I asked him to come and see me. I want by all means to introduce him to you—and the Stakhovs."

"Who is he? Oh, yes, that Serb or Bulgarian you told me about, isn't it? That patriot? Would he be the man who's inspired you with all those philosophical notions?"

"Perhaps."

"He's an extraordinary individual, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Intelligent? Gifted?"

"Intelligent? Yes. Gifted? I don't know; I don't think so."

"You don't? What's remarkable about him, then?"

"You'll see. And now I think it's time to go. Anna Vasilyevna must be waiting for us. I wonder what the time is."

"It's past two. Let us go. What a heat! This conversation has set my blood on fire. There was a moment when you, too—I'm not an artist for nothing; I can see everything. Tell me frankly, does a certain woman interest you?"

Shubin tried to look into Bersenev's face, but Bersenev turned and walked out of the shade. With careless grace

Shubin toddled after him. Bersenev lumbered along, raising his shoulders high, and stretching his neck; for all that he looked more respectable than Shubin, more of a gentleman, we might have said, if the word had not become so trite in this country.

II

The two young men went down to the river and walked on along the bank. The water exhaled freshness, and its soft lapping was soothing to the ear.

"I wish I could have another swim," said Shubin, "but I'm afraid we may be late. Look at the river—it seems to be beckoning to us. The ancient Greeks would have seen it as a nymph. But we aren't Greeks, O nymph! We are thick-skinned Scythians."

"Well, we have our mermaids," remarked Bersenev.

"You and your mermaids! What do I, a sculptor, want with that offspring of a cowed, cold fancy, those images born in the stuffy air of village huts, in the darkness of winter nights? I want light and space! Christ, when shall I get a chance to go to Italy? When—?"

"You mean when you'll go to the Ukraine."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Andrei Petrovich, picking on me for a rash step that I bitterly regret as it is. Well, yes, I did make a fool of myself. That kind soul, Anna Vasilyevna, gave me some money for a trip to Italy, but I went to the *Khokhols** instead, to eat dumplings, and—"

"You needn't finish," Bersenev interrupted.

"All the same, I tell you it wasn't wasted money. The types I saw there, especially the women! Of course I know there's no salvation outside Italy."

"You'll go to Italy," said Bersenev, without turning to

* Russian nickname for the Ukrainians—*Tr.*

him, "and do nothing there. You'll flap your wings without taking flight. I know the likes of you!"

"Stavasser did take flight, didn't he? And he wasn't the only one. If I don't take flight, that will mean I'm a penguin, a wingless bird. I lack air here, I want to go to Italy," Shubin continued. "There is sunshine there and beauty!"

Just then a young girl in a broad-brimmed straw hat, with a pink parasol on her shoulder, came into view on the path along which the two friends were walking.

"But what is this I see?" cried Shubin all of a sudden. "Beauty is coming to meet us even here! Greetings to charming Zoya from a humble artist!" He flourished his hat theatrically.

The girl, to whom the exclamation referred, stopped, shook her finger at him and, waiting till the two friends had joined her, said in a ringing little voice, with a slight burr, "Why aren't you coming to have your dinner, gentlemen? It is ready."

"Do I hear right?" said Shubin, with mock surprise. "Can it be that you, adorable Zoya, have come to fetch us in this heat? Is that what I'm supposed to understand from your words? Tell me, is that really so? Or rather don't, because if you do I shall drop dead with remorse."

"Please have done, Pavel Yakovlevich," replied the girl, not without annoyance. "Why can't you ever talk to me seriously? Do you want to make me angry?" she added, pouting her lips with a coquettish grimace.

"You couldn't get angry with me, ideal Zoya Nikitichna; you wouldn't fling me into the black depths of frenzied despair. As to talking seriously, that's more than I can do because I'm not a serious man."

The girl shrugged her shoulders and turned to Bersenev.

"That's how he always treats me, as if I were a child. But I'm over eighteen. I'm grown up."

"Good Lord!" Shubin groaned, raising his eyes heavenwards, while Bersenev smiled.

The girl stamped her foot.

"Pavel Yakovlevich! I'll get angry with you—I really shall! Hélène started out with me," she continued, "but then decided to stay in the garden. The heat frightened her, but I'm not afraid of it. Come along."

She led the way along the path, her slender figure swaying slightly at every step; with a pretty, black-mittened hand she tossed back the long silky locks from her face.

The two friends followed her, Shubin alternately pressing his hands to his heart without a word and lifting them above his head, and a few minutes later found themselves in front of one of the numerous summer *dachas* surrounding Kountsovo. The little wooden house, topped by an attic and painted pink, stood in a garden, peeping naïvely, as it were, through the green of the trees. Zoya was the first to open the wicket; she ran into the garden and cried, "I've brought the wanderers!" A young girl, with a pallid, expressive face, rose from a bench by the path. A lady in a lavender silk dress appeared on the threshold of the house and, raising her embroidered cambric handkerchief over her head to shield herself from the sun, smiled languidly and listlessly.

III

At the age of seven Anna Vasilyevna Stakhova, *née* Shubina, had lost her parents and inherited a sizable estate. She had both very wealthy and very poor relatives; the poor ones were on her father's side, and the wealthy ones—Senator Volgin and the Princes Chikurasov—on her mother's. Prince Ardalion Chikurasov, her guardian, had put her in the best Moscow boarding-school.

and after she had finished it took her into his family. He kept an open house and gave dances in winter. Nikolai Artemyevich Stakhov, Anna Vasilyevna's future husband, won her heart at one of those dances, at which she wore "a delightful pink dress with a *coiffure* of small roses." She still had that *coiffure*.

Stakhov, the son of a retired captain wounded in 1812 and rewarded with a lucrative position in Petersburg, entered military school at sixteen, and upon finishing it was assigned to the Guards. He was good-looking and well-built, and was considered almost the best dance partner at the second-rate parties he mostly attended, the way to high society being barred to him. Since his early youth he had had two ambitions –to become aide-de-camp to the Emperor and to marry an heiress. It was not long before he had to relinquish the former ambition, but he clung all the more doggedly to the latter. That was why he went to Moscow every winter. He spoke a glib French, and as he did not indulge in carousals was reputed to be a philosopher. When he was still an ensign there was nothing he liked better than a hearty argument, for instance, as to whether one could journey round the globe in the course of one's life, or find out what went on at the bottom of the sea, and always held that one could not.

Stakhov had turned twenty-five when he "hooked" Anna Vasilyevna; he retired from the army to manage the estate that she had brought him as a dowry. But country life soon bored him, and as his peasants paid quit-rent and so his presence was not essential, he moved to his wife's Moscow house. He had never played any games in his youth, but now he developed a taste for lotto, and when lotto was prohibited, for *yeralash*.* Finding life at home dull, he became intimate with a widow

* A card-game.—*Tr.*

of German descent and spent nearly all his time at her house. In the summer of 1853 he did not move to Kountsovo but stayed in Moscow, ostensibly because he wanted to take the waters, but actually because he was reluctant to part with the widow. However, he did not talk much with her, and when he did it was mostly to argue about whether one could forecast the weather, and so on. Once somebody called him a *frondeur*, and the term tickled his fancy. "No," he said to himself, smugly drooping the corners of his mouth and rocking, "it isn't easy to satisfy me; you can't gull me." His *frondeuring* consisted in the fact that, upon hearing, let us say, the word "nerves," he would ask, "And what are nerves?" Or someone would mention in his presence the progress made in astronomy, and he would ask, "Do you believe in astronomy?" But when he wanted to crush an opponent, he would say, "All that is just words." It must be admitted that many persons thought—and still think—that kind of objection irrefutable; and Stakhov never suspected that the widow, Augustina Christianovna, in her letters to her cousin, Theodolinde Petersilius, used to call him *mein Pinselchen.*

Stakhov's wife, Anna Vasilyevna, was a slim little woman with delicate features, prone to agitation and sadness. At the boarding-school she adored music and novels, then gave up both to prink herself, but abandoned that, too. She then devoted herself to her daughter, but her energy flagged, and she entrusted the girl's upbringing to a governess. In the end she did nothing but being sad and quietly agitated. Yelena Nikolayevna's birth had undermined her health, and she could have no more children, a circumstance at which Stakhov hinted to justify his intimacy with the widow. Anna Vasilyevna was deeply chagrined by her husband's infidelity; what pained her particularly was that he had once played a trick on her and presented the widow with two greys from

Anna Vasilyevna's own stud. She never reproached him to his face, but behind his back she complained of him to everyone in the house in turn, including her daughter. Although she did not like going out, it pleased her to have a visitor keep her company and talk to her; when left alone she would languish. She had a very soft, fond heart, and life was not long in crushing her.

Pavel Yakovlevich Shubin was a distant relation of hers. His father had been in the civil service in Moscow. His brothers had entered military school. He was the youngest, of delicate health, and his mother's favourite, and he stayed at home. His parents meant to send him to the university, and supported him, hard as it was for them, while he was at the *gymnasium*. He showed an early inclination for sculpture; one day the hulking Senator Volgin saw at his aunt's a figurine modelled by the lad, who was sixteen then, and announced that he was going to patronize the "gifted youth." The sudden death of Shubin's father almost upset the young man's career. The senator, a patron of talent, presented him with a plaster cast of Homer, and that was all. But Anna Vasilyevna helped him with money, and at nineteen he managed, just by the skin of his teeth, to enter the medical school of the university. He had not the least inclination for medicine, but, as matters stood at the time, he had no chance of entering any other department; besides, he hoped to study anatomy. But he did not learn anatomy; he left the university of his own accord before the end of the first year to devote himself exclusively to his calling. He worked assiduously, but did so by fits and starts. He roamed the vicinity of Moscow, modelled or sketched country wenches, and met various people—both young and old, of high or low standing, Italian moulders and Russian artists. He would not hear of entering the Academy, and refused to recognize any professor. He certainly had talent, and his name came to be

known in Moscow. His mother, born in Paris into a good family, a kind and intelligent woman, taught him French and looked after him and his affairs day and night; she was proud of him and when she was dying, still young, of consumption, persuaded Anna Vasilyevna to take him into her charge. He was in his twenty-first year then. Anna Vasilyevna complied with her sister-in-law's last wish, and Pavel installed himself in a small room in the wing of the *dacha*.

IV

"Come, let us have dinner," said the mistress of the house in a plaintive voice, and they all trooped into the dining-room. "Sit beside me, Zoé," she added, "and you, Hélène, you entertain our guest, and you, Paul, please behave, and stop teasing Zoé. I have a headache today."

Shubin raised his eyes heavenwards again; Zoé responded with a half-smile. This Zoé, or Zoya Nikitichna Müller, to be precise, was a pretty, slightly squint-eyed German-Russian, fair-haired and plump, with a little nose cleft at the tip, and with tiny red lips. She could sing Russian songs quite well, and played all sorts of little things, gay or sentimental, very nicely on the piano. She dressed tastefully, but somehow childishly, and much too neatly. Anna Vasilyevna had taken her on as a companion for her daughter, but mostly kept her by her own side. Yelena did not complain, for, when she happened to be left alone with Zoya, she had not the faintest idea what to talk to her about.

Dinner lasted rather long. Bersenev chatted with Yelena about university life, and about his plans and expectations; Shubin listened in silence as he ate with exaggerated greed, occasionally glancing in comical distress at Zoya, who always responded with the same

languorous half-smile. After dinner Yelena went into the garden, accompanied by Bersenev and Shubin. Zoya followed them with her eyes, and then sat down at the piano with a slight shrug. "Why don't *you* go out for a walk?" asked Anna Vasilyevna; but, getting no answer, she added, "Play something sad—"

"*La dernière pensée de Weber?*" asked Zoya.

"Ah, yes, Weber," replied Anna Vasilyevna. She sank down into an easy chair, and a tear glistened on her eyelash.

Meanwhile Yelena led the two friends into an acacia arbour, with a small wooden table in the middle and benches round it. Shubin looked about him, jumped up and down several times, and whispered, "Wait!" He ran back to his room, brought a lump of clay, and began to model Zoya's figure, shaking his head, mumbling to himself, and chuckling.

"Here he is at his old tricks again," said Yelena, glancing at his work, and turned to Bersenev to resume the conversation started at dinner.

"'Old tricks'!" echoed Shubin. "But it's an inexhaustible subject! And she's particularly exasperating today."

"Why so?" asked Yelena. "One might think you were talking of some vicious crone. She's a pretty young girl—"

"I daresay," Shubin interrupted her, "she is pretty—very much so. I'm positive anyone who looks at her is bound to think, 'There goes someone nice to—dance a polka with.' I'm also positive that she knows it and it pleases her. Then why all that prudery and false modesty? You know what I mean, though," he muttered "But you wouldn't care to go into that now."

He broke up Zoya's figurine and set about hastily moulding and crushing the clay, with what seemed like annoyance.

"So you would like to be a professor?" Yelena asked Bersenev.

"Yes," he replied, thrusting his red hands between his knees. "It's my cherished dream. Of course, I know very well that I fall very far short of so high a— I mean I still know too little; but I hope I may get permission to go abroad. I shall stay there for three or four years, if necessary, and then—"

He paused, and cast down his eyes; then he looked quickly up and smoothed his hair, smiling awkwardly. When speaking to a woman he became even slower of speech, and the lisp was more pronounced.

"You want to be a professor of history?" asked Yelena.

"Yes," he answered. "Or of philosophy, if possible," he added, lowering his voice.

"He is deucedly well versed in philosophy as it is," remarked Shubin, drawing deep furrows in the clay with his nail. "Why should he go abroad?"

"And you would be quite satisfied with your position?" asked Yelena, leaning on one elbow and looking him straight in the eyes.

"Quite, Yelena Nikolayevna, quite. Could there be a better vocation? To follow in the footsteps of Granovsky! The very idea makes me feel happy and diffident—yes, diffident, because—because I'm aware of the little ability I have. My poor father gave me his blessing. I'll never forget his last words."

"Your father died last winter, didn't he?"

"Yes, he died last February."

"I understand," Yelena continued, "he left a remarkable manuscript. Is that true?"

"Yes, it is. He was a wonderful man. You would have liked him, Yelena Nikolayevna."

"I'm sure I should. What is the manuscript about?"

"That is something I could hardly put in a nutshell. My

father was a learned man, a Schellingian, and the expressions he used weren't always quite clear—"

"You will forgive me my ignorance, Andrei Petrovich," Yelena interrupted him, "if I ask you what a Schellingian is?"

Bersenev smiled faintly.

"A follower of Schelling, the German philosopher, and as to Schelling's theories—"

"Andrei Petrovich, please!" Shubin cried suddenly. "You aren't going to lecture Yelena Nikolayevna on Schelling, are you? Spare her for goodness' sake!"

"Not at all," Bersenev murmured, colouring. "I just wanted to—"

"What's wrong with a lecture?" Yelena put in. "You and I could do with some lectures, Pavel Yakovlevich."

Shubin stared at her, and suddenly burst out laughing.

"What are you laughing at?" she asked coldly, almost brusquely.

Shubin broke off his merriment.

"Come, don't be angry," he said, after a pause. "I'm sorry. But, really, what's the idea of discussing philosophy in this weather and under these trees? Hadn't we better talk about nightingales and roses and young eyes and smiles?"

"Yes, and French novels and women's clothes," Yelena continued.

"Why not clothes, too, provided they are nice?" Shubin replied.

"'Why not'! Suppose we don't care to talk about clothes? You title yourself a free artist, then why must you encroach on other people's freedom? And let me ask you this: Since that's your way of thinking, why are you so critical of Zoya? She is just the one to talk to about clothes and roses."

Shubin went red, and got up from his bench.

"So that's how it is, eh?" he began in a nervous tone

of voice. "I see what you are driving at: you're sending me away to her, Yelena Nikolayevna. In other words, I'm one too many here."

"I didn't dream of sending you away."

"You mean," Shubin went on warmly, "that I deserve no other company, that I'm a match for her, that I'm as shallow, and silly, and petty, as that sugary German miss. Isn't that so?"

Yelena frowned.

"You used to have a different opinion of her, Pavel Yakovlevich," she remarked.

"Ha! A reproach! Now you reproach me!" exclaimed Shubin. "Very well, I won't deny that there was a moment—just one moment—when those fresh, banal cheeks - But if I chose to give you tit for tat and remind you — Good afternoon," he added suddenly, "I almost let my tongue run away with me."

Crushing the clay, which he had shaped into a head, he rushed out, and went to his room.

"He's a baby," said Yelena, looking after him.

"An artist," said Bersenev, smiling quietly. "All artists are like that. You have to humour them. It's their due."

"Yes," replied Yelena, "but so far Pavel has in no way proved it's his due. What has he accomplished so far? Give me your arm and let us take a walk. He interrupted us. We were talking about your father's manuscript."

Bersenev took Yelena's arm, and they started on a stroll about the garden; but they did not resume the discussion they had had to break off at the very beginning. Instead, Bersenev again began expounding his views on a professorship and his future work. He walked along beside Yelena with a slow, clumsy step, awkwardly supporting her arm and occasionally bumping into her with his shoulder, but never once glancing at her. His speech flowed easily if not quite freely; he used simple and accurate terms, and in his eyes, wandering over the tree-

trunks, the sand on the path, the grass, there shone the quiet emotion of noble sentiments, while his voice, now calm, rang with the joy of a man speaking his mind to one who is dear to him. Yelena listened with deep attention, her face half-turned to him, her gaze fixed on his face, which had paled slightly, and on his eyes, friendly and gentle, though shunning hers. Her heart was opening, and there was something tender and noble and good pouring into it, or perhaps growing up in it.

V

Shubin stayed in his room throughout the rest of the day. It was quite dark, the half-moon was high in the heavens, the Milky Way showed white, and the stars dotted the sky when Bersenev said good-night to Anna Vasilyevna, Yelena, and Zoya and went up to his friend's room. Finding the door locked, he tapped at it.

"Who is it?" came Shubin's voice.

"It's me," answered Bersenev.

"What do you want?"

"Let me in, Pavel, and stop sulking. You should be ashamed of yourself."

"I'm not sulking—I'm asleep and seeing Zoya in a dream."

"Stop it, please. You aren't a child. Let me in. I must talk to you."

"Haven't you talked enough with Yelena?"

"Come, come. Let me in."

Shubin answered with a feigned snore. Bersenev shrugged his shoulders and started to walk home.

The night was warm and peculiarly silent, as though the whole countryside were listening and watching; and Bersenev, enveloped in the still darkness, would stop to listen and watch in his turn. Now and then, from the

tops of the near-by trees, came a faint rustle like that of a woman's dress, exciting in him an awesomely sweet sensation of half-fear. Shivers ran down his cheeks, and a momentary tear chilled his eyes; he would have liked to hide, to steal along with noiseless tread. A gust of wind swept over him; he stopped short, startled; a sleepy beetle tumbled down from a bough and hit the road with a smack. Berseney gave a faint *Oh!* and stopped again. Then he thought of Yelena, and all these fleeting sensations faded at once, leaving nothing but the invigorating impression of the fresh night and the walk; the image of the young girl filled his soul to the brim. He walked on with bowed head, recalling all that she had said. He fancied he heard a swift footfall behind him. He strained his ear; someone was running to overtake him—he could hear a panting breath—and suddenly Shubin emerged from the black circle of shadow cast by a big tree; he was hatless and dishevelled, and looked ghastly in the moonlight.

"I'm glad you took this road," he gasped. "I shouldn't have slept a wink if I hadn't caught you up. Give me your hand. You're going home, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"I'll walk with you."

"What about your hat?"

"Never mind that. I've even taken off my cravat. It's warm."

The two friends walked awhile in silence.

"I cut a poor figure today, didn't I?" Shubin asked unexpectedly.

"Frankly, you did. I couldn't make you out at all. I'd never seen you like that. Whatever made you so angry? It was such a trifle!"

"Humph," grunted Shubin. "That's your way of seeing it, but I'm in no mood for trifles. You see," he added, "I must tell you that I—that— You may think

whatever you please— I'm—yes—I'm in love with Yelena."

"You're in love with Yelena!" echoed Bersenev, and halted.

"Yes," Shubin went on, affecting a casual tone. "Does that surprise you? Well, I'll tell you more than that. Until tonight I could hope that she might some day return my love. But tonight I saw there was no hope. She loves somebody else."

"Does she? But whom?"

"Whom? You!" cried Shubin, and slapped Bersenev's shoulder.

"Me!"

"Yes."

Bersenev stepped back and stood motionless. Shubin scrutinized his face.

"You sound surprised. You're a modest youth. But she loves you. You may set your mind at ease on that score."

"What nonsense you're talking!" Bersenev said at last, annoyed.

"No, I'm not. But why did we stop? Let's go on. It's easier when you walk. I've known her for a long time, and I know her well. I can't be mistaken. You've won her heart. Time was when she liked me; but, in the first place, I'm too light-headed for her liking, while you are a serious being, a morally and physically cleanly individual, a—wait, I've not finished yet—a conscientiously moderate enthusiast, a genuine representative of those priests of science whom—no, that isn't the word—*which* the lesser Russian nobility is so rightly proud of! In the second place, the other day Yelena caught me kissing Zoya's hands."

"Zoya's?"

"Yes, Zoya's. How can I help it? She has such lovely shoulders."

"Shoulders?"

"Well, yes, shoulders or hands, what's the difference? Yelena found me at that pastime after dinner, and before dinner I had run Zoya down in her presence. I'm afraid Yelena doesn't understand how very natural this sort of contradiction is. Then along came you. You believe—what is it you believe in? You blush, you're embarrassed, you lead off about Schiller and Schelling—and she's always looking for remarkable people, you know—and so you've won, while I, poor wretch that I am, try to be funny—although—"

Suddenly Shubin broke into tears; he stepped aside, sat on the ground, and clutched his hair.

Bersenev drew near him.

"What is this childishness, Pavel?" he said. "What's come over you tonight? Heaven alone knows what nonsense has got into your head, and now you're crying. Really, I think you're just pretending."

Shubin looked up. The tears glistened on his cheeks in the moonlight, but he was smiling.

"You may think what you like, Andrei Petrovich," he said. "I'm even willing to admit that I'm being hysterical, but I'm in love with Yelena, I swear I am, and Yelena loves *you*. However, I promised to see you home, and I'll keep my word."

He rose.

"What a night! So silvery, so dark, so young! How good those who are loved must feel now! How jolly it must be for them not to sleep! You aren't going to sleep, are you, Andrei Petrovich?"

Bersenev made no reply but hastened his step.

"Why are you in such a hurry?" Shubin continued. "Believe me, you'll never have another night like this as long as you live, and all that's waiting for you at home is Schelling. To be sure, he stood you in good stead today, but even so you shouldn't be in a hurry. Sing if

you can, sing louder than ever; and if you can't sing, take off your hat, throw back your head, and smile at the stars. They're all looking down at you—you alone; the stars do nothing but look down at those in love, and that's why they are so beautiful. You *are* in love, aren't you, Andrei Petrovich? You won't answer me. Why won't you answer me? Ah, if you feel happy you'd better not talk! I'm chattering because I'm a wretch, a man nobody loves, an actor, a juggler, a mountebank; but, oh, what silent ecstasy I should draw from this nightly breeze, under these stars, these diamonds, if only I knew I was loved! Are you happy, Bersenev?"

Without a word Bersenev walked briskly on along the smooth road. The lights of the village in which he lived glimmered between the trees ahead; it consisted of no more than a dozen small *dachas*. On its very edge, under two spreading birch-trees to the right of the road, there was a grocer's shop; its windows were shuttered already, but a broad beam of light fanned out of its open door upon the beaten grass and the two trees, bringing out the whitish under side of the dense leaves. A girl, apparently a maid, stood in the shop, with her back to the door, haggling with the shopkeeper; her round cheek and delicate neck scarcely showed because of the red kerchief which she had gathered round her head and held fast at the chin with her hand. The two young men stepped into the strip of light; Shubin glanced in, stopped, and called, "Annushka!" The girl spun round with alacrity, showing a pretty, rather broad but fresh face, with lively brown eyes and black brows. "Annushka!" Shubin called again. The girl peered at him, and then, with a frightened and abashed air, ran down the steps, without finishing her purchase, slipped nimbly past, and hurried off across the road to the left, glancing back. The shopkeeper, a podgy man who, like all suburban grocers,

took no interest in anything on earth, cleared his throat and yawned after her, while Shubin turned to Bersenev and said, "She—you see, she is—there's a family here I know—well, so she's—don't imagine things—" And, without concluding the sentence, off he ran after the girl.

"Dry your eyes at least!" Bersenev shouted to him, trying to repress a laugh. But when he came home the merry expression had faded from his face; he no longer felt like laughing. He had not for one moment believed what Shubin had told him, but the words had sunk deep into his heart. "Pavel was just puiling my leg," he thought "but she's sure to fall in love some day. I wonder who he'll be."

Bersenev had a piano in his room; it was rather small and old but had an agreeably soft tone even though it was a little out of tune. He sat down and began to pick out chords. Like all Russian noblemen, he had taken music lessons when he was a boy and, like nearly all Russian noblemen, was a poor player; nevertheless, he had a passion for music. It was not the art of music that he loved, nor musical forms—symphonies and sonatas, and even opera, bored him to death—he loved the elemental, the sweetly vague sensations, pointless and all-embracing, which sound combinations and variations arouse in man. He played on for more than an hour, strumming the same chords again and again, fumbling for new ones, pausing, and lingering on reduced septimes. His heart ached, and tears welled up in his eyes more than once. He was not ashamed of them, for he was shedding them in darkness. "Pavel's right," he told himself, "I have a feeling I'll never see another night like this." Finally he rose, lit a candle, and put on his dressing-gown; then he took the second volume of *A History of the Hohenstaufens* by Raumer and, sighing once or twice, set diligently to work.

VI

Meanwhile Yelena retired to her room, sat down at the open window, and propped up her head on her hands. She had grown into the habit of spending a quarter of an hour at the window every evening, taking stock of the past day. She had just turned twenty. She was tall, with an olive complexion, big grey eyes and arched brows surrounded by tiny freckles; she had a high forehead and straight nose, a tight-lipped mouth, and a rather sharp chin. A light-brown braid hung down her delicate neck. Her entire being, the expression of her face, tense and a little timid, her clear but changeable gaze, her smile, which seemed strained, her voice, which was soft and uneven, suggested something nervously electric, something impulsive and precipitate—in short, something that could not appeal to everyone and, indeed, held off some. Her hands were soft and narrow, with long fingers, and her feet were narrow too; she walked with a quick, almost impetuous gait, bending forward a little. She had been a strange child; at first she had adored her father, then she had developed a passionate attachment for her mother, but had lately cooled towards both, particularly her father. She had begun to treat her mother as she might have a sick grandmother, while her father, who had been proud of her as long as she had passed for an unusual child, had come to fear her now that she was grown up, and he declared that she was a sort of over-enthusiastic republican, having taken after God knew whom. She resented weakness, was angered by stupidity, and could "never, never" forgive falsehood; nothing could make her part from her standards, and her very prayers were mingled with reproach. A person had only to forfeit her respect—she was quick, often much too quick, to pass judgement—and he ceased to exist as far as she was

concerned. All impressions cut deep into her heart; life was not easy for her.

The governess whom Anna Vasilyevna had entrusted with completing her daughter's education—an education which, let it be said in passing, the weary lady had not so much as started—was a Russian, the daughter of a ruined bribe-taker, a graduate of the Institute for High-Born Maidens, a very sentimental, kind-hearted, and false creature. She was always falling in love, and finished by marrying in her fiftieth year, when Yelena was seventeen, an officer who soon abandoned her. She was very fond of literature, and even did a little versifying; she developed in Yelena a taste for reading. But reading alone did not satisfy Yelena; she had longed for action, for good deeds ever since her childhood; beggars and the sick and hungry preoccupied and worried her and tormented her mind; she saw them in her dreams, and used to ask her acquaintances whether they had any; she gave alms solicitously, with an involuntary gravity, almost with trepidation. All oppressed animals, skinny mongrels, kittens doomed to die, young sparrows that had fallen out of their nest, and even insects and reptiles, found protection and support with Yelena, who did not disdain to feed them with her own hand. Her mother did not mind it; but her father was outraged by what he called his daughter's vulgar sentimentality, saying that her cats and dogs would soon eat him out of house and home. "Lena, come here, quick," he would call to her, "a spider's sucking a fly—rescue the poor wretch!" And Yelena, thoroughly alarmed, would come running to free the fly and unstick its feet. "Very good," her father would remark ironically, "now let it bite you a little, since you are so good." But she would ignore that.

When she was nine Yelena made friends with Katya, a beggar girl; she would slip away into the garden to see her and give her dainties, handkerchiefs, or ten-kopek

coins, for Katya refused to take any toys. She would sit with the girl on the ground in a secluded corner, behind a nettle bush, joyfully humble, eating the girl's dry bread and listening to her stories. Katya had an aunt, a vicious old hag who often beat her; Katya hated her, and kept on saying that she was going to run away from her and live "in God's own freedom"; Yelena would listen to those new, unfamiliar words with secret respect and awe, her gaze fixed on Katya, and everything in the girl —her quick dark eyes with the wild animal glint, her sunburnt hands, her toneless voice, and even her ragged frock—would appear to her unusual, all but sacred. Yelena would go home and for a long time afterwards think of beggars and "God's own freedom"; of how she would cut herself a hazel stick, sling a bag over her shoulder, and run away with Katya; of how she would roam the roads in a wreath of cornflowers such as she had once seen Katya wearing. If someone of the family chanced to come into her room at such a moment, she would shy and lour at him. One rainy day she went to see Katya and soiled her frock; her father saw it and called her a sloven, a peasant. She blushed painfully—she had a strange and terrible feeling. Katya often hummed a coarse song of the kind soldiers sing; Yelena learnt it. Anna Vasilyevna heard her sing it and was furious.

"Where did you pick up that horrid stuff?" she asked her daughter.

Yelena glanced at her mother without uttering a word; she felt that she would much rather be torn to pieces than betray her secret, and again that terrible and sweet sensation gripped her heart. However, her association with Katya did not last long; the poor girl fell ill with fever, and died in a few days.

When she had heard the news of Katya's death, Yelena missed her terribly, and could not sleep for many nights. The beggar girl's last words kept on ringing in

her ears, and she thought she heard a voice calling her too....

And so the years rolled by, Yelena's youth flowed along as swiftly and noiselessly as an undercurrent of melted snow, in outward inaction and inner struggle and anxiety. She had no friends, never having become intimate with any of the girls who called at Stakhov's. Parental authority never weighed upon her, and she had enjoyed almost complete independence since she was sixteen; she led a life all her own, but it was a solitary life. Her soul would flare up and then die down in solitude, it would flutter like a caged bird, though there was no cage; nobody held or restrained her, and yet she languished, yearning for freedom. Sometimes she could not understand, and was even afraid of, herself. The things that surrounded her appeared to her absurd or unaccountable. "How can I live without love? But there's nobody to love!" she soliloquized, and her thoughts and sensations terrified her. She almost died of malignant fever at eighteen; her naturally healthy and strong physique, shaken to the foundations, was long in recovering from it. Finally no trace was left of the disease; nevertheless, her father kept on talking about her nerves, not without ill feeling. At times it occurred to her that she wanted something nobody else wanted, or thought of, in all Russia. Then she would subside, and even laugh at herself; she would spend her days carefree, then, unexpectedly, something nameless but powerful, something that she could not resist, would start seething in her, seeking an outlet. Then the storm would blow over, and her wings would droop wearily back without her ever having taken flight. But these violent impulses told on her. Hard as she tried not to betray what went on in her, the anguish of her agitated soul was manifest even in her outward calm, and her kin were often justified in shrugging their

shoulders, wondering at, and refusing to understand, her "kinks."

The day our story begins, Yelena stayed at the window longer than usual. She thought a great deal about Bersenev and her conversation with him. She liked him, and she believed in the warmth of his sentiments and the purity of his intentions. He had never yet spoken to her as he did that evening. She recalled the look in his shy eyes, his smile, smiled herself at the recollection, and fell to thinking, but it was no longer about him. She began to peer "into the night" through the open window. For a long time she looked at the dark, low-hanging sky; then she rose, tossed back her hair, and held her bare, chilled arms up to the sky, knowing not why; then she dropped them, knelt in front of her bed, pressed her face to the pillow and, despite her efforts not to give way to the feelings overwhelming her, broke into tears in which there was a strange puzzlement but which were nonetheless scalding.

VII

Next day, after eleven o'clock, Bersenev took a droshky going back to Moscow. He wanted to draw a postal order, buy some books, and use the opportunity to see Insarov. It had occurred to him during his last conversation with Shubin to invite Insarov to his *dacha*. But it took him long to locate the Bulgarian; Insarov had moved to a new lodging that was not easy to reach, being situated in the back yard of an ugly brick house, built in Petersburg style, between Arbat and Povarskaya Street. In vain Bersenev walked from one dingy porch to another, calling for the gate-keeper or anybody who might be willing to answer. Even in Petersburg, to say nothing of Moscow, gate-keepers are careful to keep out of sight of visitors, and none of them responded to Bersenev. Only

an inquisitive tailor in his shirt-sleeves, with a skein of grey thread slung over his shoulder, silently stuck his dull, unshaven face with a black eye out of a window, and a black hornless goat standing on a dunghill turned, gave a plaintive bleat, and resumed chewing its cud with added alacrity. At last a woman in an old coat and battered high boots took pity on Bersenev and showed him the way to Insarov's. Bersenev found him in. Insarov rented a room from the self-same tailor who had been so indifferent to the predicament of a stranger. It was a large, almost bare room with dark-green walls, three square windows, a tiny bedstead in a corner, a leather sofa in another, and, suspended just under the ceiling, a huge cage that had once housed a nightingale. Insarov came to meet Bersenev as soon as the latter had crossed the threshold, but he did not exclaim. "Oh, it's you!" or "Why, God bless you! What lucky wind brings you here?" He did not even say "Good afternoon," but merely squeezed his hand and led him to the only clair there was.

"Take a seat," he said, and sat on the edge of the table. "The room's in a mess, as you see," he added, pointing to a heap of papers and books on the floor. "I haven't yet settled down properly. Had no time."

Insarov spoke an absolutely correct Russian, pronouncing every word clearly and vigorously; but his guttural voice, though quite agreeable to the ear, sounded somehow un-Russian. His foreign origin was even more marked in his appearance: he was about twenty-five, of a wiry build, with a hollow chest and knotty hands; he had sharp features, an aquiline nose, jet-black, straight hair, a small forehead, small, deep-set, piercing eyes, and bushy brows; when he smiled his perfect white teeth flashed between his thin, hard, much too sharply outlined lips. He wore an old but neat-looking coat buttoned up to the chin.

"Why did you leave your former lodging?" asked Bersenev.

"This one is cheaper, and closer to the university."

"But this is holidays! The idea of spending the summer in town! You ought to have rented a *dacha*, since you had decided to move anyway."

Insarov made no reply, and offered Bersenev a pipe, saying, "I'm sorry, I have neither cigars nor cigarettes."

Bersenev lit the pipe.

"I, for one, have rented a cottage near Kountsovo," he went on. "It's quite inexpensive and very nice. There's even a spare room upstairs."

Again Insarov made no reply.

Bersenev took a deep pull.

"I've been thinking," he spoke up again, letting out the smoke in a thin jet, "how nice it would be if there were someone—such as you, I said to myself—who wanted—who was willing to live in that room upstairs! What do you say, Dmitry Nikanorovich?"

Insarov raised his small eyes to look at him.

"Are you offering that I should live in your *dacha*?"

"Yes, I have a spare room upstairs."

"I'm very much obliged to you, Andrei Petrovich, but I think that is more than I can afford."

"How is that?"

"I cannot afford to live in the country. Keeping two lodgings at a time would be above my means."

"But I didn't—" Bersenev began, and stopped short. "It wouldn't entail any additional expense on your part," he continued. "You would keep this lodging, of course; but then everything is so cheap over there; we could even arrange to have our meals together."

Insarov kept silence. Bersenev felt ill at ease.

"Call on me some day at least," he said after a while. "I should like to introduce you to a family that lives nearby. If you knew, Insarov, what a wonderful daughter they

have! There's also a close friend of mine there, a highly gifted man. I'm sure you would make friends with him." (A Russian likes to show hospitality—by offering his acquaintances if nothing else.) "You must come, really. But you'd do better still to move to my place. We could work together, and read too. I study history and philosophy, and these are things that interest you. I have a great many books."

Insarov rose and paced the room.

"May I ask," he inquired at last, "how much you're paying for the *dacha*?"

"A hundred silver rubles."

"How many rooms are there?"

"Five."

"In other words, it comes to twenty rubles a room?"

"Yes, but, really, I don't need that room. It's vacant."

"Perhaps it is, but listen to me," said Insarov, with a resolute movement of his head. "I can only accept your offer if you agree to my paying the appropriate rent. I can afford to pay twenty rubles, especially as you said I'd be able to save on everything else."

"Certainly; but I do feel bad about it."

"There is no other way, Andrei Petrovich."

"Well, do as you like. But I must say you are stubborn!"

Once more Insarov made no reply.

The two young men fixed the day on which Insarov was to move. They called the landlord; but he first sent in his daughter, a girl of about seven, with a huge coloured kerchief on her head; with almost terrified attention, she listened to all that Insarov had to tell her, and went silently out; then in came her mother, who was in the last month of her pregnancy, and who also wore a kerchief, except that it was very small. Insarov told her that he was moving to the country near Kountsovo but wanted to keep the lodging, and asked her to look after

his belongings; she, too, looked terrified as she went out. Finally the landlord himself made his appearance; at first he seemed to understand everything, and he only asked pensively, before walking out, "Near Kountsovo, is it?" Then he suddenly opened the door again and cried, "So you're keeping the room, huh?" Insarov reassured him. "Because I've got to know," said the tailor sternly, and was gone.

Bersenev went home, very pleased with the success of his mission. Insarov saw him to the door with an amiable courtesy that is rare in Russia; left alone, he carefully took off his coat and set about sorting out his papers.

VIII

That evening Anna Vasilyevna sat in her drawing-room, getting ready to cry. She was in the company of her husband and a certain Uvar Ivanovich Stakhov, Nikolai Artemyevich's distant relation, a retired cornet of about sixty, obese to immobility, with sleepy yellow eyes and thick, colourless lips in a puffy, sallow face. Ever since his retirement he had been living in Moscow on interest from a small fortune left to him by his wife, who came of a merchant family. He never did anything, and hardly thought at all, or if he did he kept his thoughts to himself. He was excited and showed some activity only once in his life, when, having read in the newspapers about the *contre-bombardon*, a new instrument displayed at the London World Fair, he expressed the desire to order the instrument, and even inquired where and through what office he had to send the money.

Uvar Ivanovich wore a wide tobacco-coloured frock-coat and a white neckerchief, ate often and a great deal, and when in predicament, that is to say, whenever he had to voice an opinion, he spasmodically twiddled the fingers

of his right hand in the air—first from the thumb towards the little finger, and then the other way, saying with an effort, "We ought to—er—somehow—"

He sat in an arm-chair at the window, breathing laboriously. Nikolai Artemyevich Stakhov was striding to and fro, his hands in his pockets; there was a look of discontent on his face.

At last he halted, and shook his head.

"Yes," he began, "young people had different manners in my day. Young people did not presume to ignore their elders. But it's amazing what they are like nowadays. Perhaps *I* am wrong and they are right—perhaps. But still, I have my own ideas about things; after all, I wasn't born a dolt. What do you say to that, Uvar Ivanovich?"

Uvar Ivanovich glanced at him, and merely twiddled his fingers.

"Take Yelena Nikolayevna," Stakhov continued. "It's true I don't understand her. My mind isn't exalted enough for that. Her heart is so spacious that it embraces all creation, down to the smallest cockroach or frog—in short, everything and everybody but her own father. Very well, I know that and I mind my own business. Because it's all nerves and learning and soaring aloft in the heavens—things beyond my ken. But Mr. Shubin—I grant that he's a wonderful, an extraordinary artist, and I don't question it; nevertheless, his disrespect for someone older than himself, for one to whom he owes a good deal, after all—that is something which I, speaking frankly, cannot put up with *dans mon gros bon sens*. I'm not exacting by nature—not at all; but there's a limit to everything."

Anna Vasilyevna rang the bell in agitation. The boy-servant came in.

"Where's Pavel Yakovlevich?" she asked. "Why doesn't he come when I call him?"

Stakhov shrugged his shoulders.

"What on earth do you want him for? I didn't ask you to send for him—indeed, I don't want you to."

"What do you mean—what for? He has troubled you; perhaps he's interfered with your course of treatment. I want him to explain. I want to know in what way he has angered you."

"I repeat that I don't ask for it. Fancy doing such a thing—*devant les domestiques*."

Anna Vasilyevna coloured slightly.

"You shouldn't say that, Nikolai Artemyevich. I never —*devant—les domestiques*— Go, Fedya, and mind you bring Pavel Yakovlevich here at once."

The boy went out.

"There's no need whatsoever," said Stakhov through clenched teeth, and resumed pacing the room. "I didn't mean that at all."

"But Paul must apologize to you."

"Why, what do I want his apologies for? And what's in an apology? Just words."

"What do you mean—what for? We must admonish him."

"Do it yourself. He's more likely to listen to you. *I* bear him no grudge."

"No, no, Nikolai Artemyevich, you've been in a bad temper ever since you came. You even seem to have lost weight lately. I'm afraid the waters haven't been doing you any good."

"I need the waters," remarked Stakhov. "My liver is bad."

Just then Shubin came in. He looked tired. A faint, slightly ironical smile played on his lips.

"Did you call me, Anna Vasilyevna?" he asked.

"I certainly did. Look here, Paul, this is horrid. I'm very much displeased with you. How can you be so disrespectful to Nikolai Artemyevich?"

"Did Nikolai Artemyevich complain of me?" asked Shubin as he glanced at Stakhov, the ironical smile lingering on his lips.

Stakhov turned away and lowered his eyes.

"Yes, he did. I don't know in what way you've offended him, but you must apologize at once because his health is very poor now, and, besides, young people must respect their benefactors."

"Dear me, what logic!" thought Shubin, and turned to Stakhov.

"I'm ready to offer you my apologies, Nikolai Artemyevich," he said, with a courteous half-bow, "if I have really hurt your feelings in any way."

"It wasn't that at all," Stakhov replied, still avoiding Shubin's gaze. "However, I forgive you willingly, because you know I'm not one to hold things against anybody."

"Oh, that is beyond question!" answered Shubin. "But may I ask whether Anna Vasilyevna knows what my offence is?"

"No, I don't know anything," replied Anna Vasilyevna, and stretched out her neck.

"Jesus!" Stakhov hastened to exclaim, "I've asked and implored you, and told you time and again I hate these explanations and scenes! One comes home once in a blue moon to take a rest—one is told there's the family circle, *l'intérieur*, and one ought to behave like a paterfamilias —but what one gets at home is nothing but scenes and trouble. One can't relax for a moment, and so has to go to the club or—or somewhere else. One is a human being, and one's physique has certain requirements, but instead—"

Without finishing his speech, Stakhov hurried out, banging the door. Anna Vasilyevna looked after him.

"To the club, eh?" she whispered bitterly. "That isn't where you're going, you rake! There's no one at the club to present with horses from my own stud, and greys at

that! My favourite colour! Yes, you flighty man," she added, raising her voice, "it isn't the club you're going to. And you, Paul, aren't you ashamed of yourself?" she went on, getting up. "I thought you were grown up. Now I've got a headache. Do you know where Zoya is?"

"I think she's upstairs. That sensible little fox always seeks shelter in her own nook when the weather's like this."

"Please, Paul!" Anna Vasilyevna looked round searchingly. "Have you seen my glass with pounded horse-radish? Do me a favour—don't anger me any more."

"How could I, Auntie! Here, let me kiss your hand. As for your horse-radish, I saw it on your desk in the study."

"Darya always mislays it," Anna Vasilyevna murmured as she withdrew, her silk dress rustling.

Shubin made to follow her, but stopped as he heard Uvar Ivanovich's voice behind his back.

"That's not—the sort of treatment—a milksop like you—should get," said the retired cornet haltingly.

Shubin walked up to him.

"But why not, esteemed Uvar Ivanovich?"

"Why not? You're young, so show respect. Yes."

"Who for?"

"Who for? You know who. What's so funny, you?"

Shubin crossed his arms on his chest.

"Why, you representative of the communal principle!" he exclaimed. "You black-earth force, you foundation of the social edifice!"

Uvar Ivanovich twiddled his fingers.

"That's enough, young fellow, don't provoke me."

"Here is a nobleman who's no longer so young as he used to be," Shubin continued, "but see how much happy, childish faith he still has! Respect, indeed! Do you know, you elemental man, why Nikolai Artemyevich is angry with me? He and I were at his German widow's all the morning, and we sang in a trio 'Linger awhile

with me.' You should have heard it. I think you like that sort of thing. We sang and sang until I was bored stiff; I saw it was too good—there was too much tenderness. So I began teasing them both. I did it quite nicely. At first she was cross with me, then with him; and then he was cross with her and said he only felt happy at home where it was like paradise; and she said to him he had no morals; and I said to her *Ach*! in German. He left, but I stayed. He came here—to paradise, that is—and found it unbearable. So he started grumbling. Now who do you think is to blame?"

"You, of course," replied Uvar Ivanovich.

Shubin stared blankly at him.

"May I ask you, estimable knight," he said in an obsequious voice, "whether you were pleased to utter those mysterious words as a result of exercising your faculty of apprehension, or in intuitive response to a momentary urge to produce an air-vibration known as sound?"

"Don't provoke me, I tell you!" groaned Uvar Ivanovich.

Shubin ran out, laughing.

"Hey!" Uvar Ivanovich called a quarter of an hour later. "Bring me—er—a glass of vodka."

The boy-servant brought some vodka and a snack on a tray. Uvar Ivanovich gently took up the glass from the tray and inspected it with tense concentration, as though unable to make out what he was holding. Then he looked at the boy and asked whether his name was Vaska. Then he put on a distressed air, drank the vodka, had a bite, and fumbled in his pocket for his handkerchief. Long after the boy had removed the tray and decanter, eaten up what was left of the herring, and even taken a snooze, nestled against his master's overcoat, Uvar Ivanovich still held his handkerchief in front of him on outspread fingers, gazing with the same tense concentration at the window, then at the floor and walls.

IX

Shubin had just returned to his room and opened a book when Stakhov's valet slipped in and handed him a small triangular note sealed with a large seal of heraldic design.

"I hope," the note ran, "that as an honourable man you will not take the liberty of making the least allusion to a certain promissory note discussed this morning. You know my relationship and my rules, the negligibility of the sum, and other circumstances; furthermore, there are family secrets which should be respected, and peace in the family is a sacred thing denied by none but *êtres sans cœur,* among whom I have no reason to class you. (Please return this note.) *N. S.*"

Shubin scribbled with a pencil at the foot of the note: "Do not worry—I can still do without pilfering handkerchiefs from other people's pockets," returned the note to the valet, and went back to the book. But soon it slipped from his hands. He looked at the sky glowing with sunset and at two young, sturdy pine-trees standing apart from the other trees, and said to himself, "The pines are bluish by day, but how gloriously green they are at sundown!" And he went into the garden in the secret hope of meeting Yelena. He was not disappointed. Her dress flitted on the shrub-lined path ahead. He overtook her and said as he came alongside, "Don't look my way, I'm not worth it."

She gave him a fleeting glance and as fleeting a smile, and walked on towards the far end of the garden. Shubin followed her.

"I begged you not to look at me," he said, "and yet I'm speaking to you—an obvious contradiction! But it doesn't matter—this isn't the first time I've done it. I'm thinking that I haven't yet asked properly your forgiveness for my foolish behaviour of yesterday. You aren't angry with me, Yelena Nikolayevna, are you?"

She stopped, but did not answer him at once—not because she was angry, but because her mind was far off.

"No," she said at last, "I'm not angry with you at all."

Shubin bit his lip.

"What a preoccupied—and what an indifferent face!" he muttered. "Yelena Nikolayevna," he continued, raising his voice, "may I tell you a little story? Once I had a friend, and that friend also had a friend, who at first behaved himself as an honest man should, but afterwards took to drink. Early one morning my friend met him in the street—and let me tell you that their friendship was over and done with by that time—he met him and saw he was drunk. So my friend turned away. But the other came up and said, 'I shouldn't mind,' he said, 'if you hadn't bowed, but why did you turn away? Perhaps I'm doing this because I'm in trouble. May I rest in peace!' "

Shubin fell silent.

"And that's all?" asked Yelena.

"Yes."

"I don't understand. What are you hinting at? You've just been telling me not to look your way."

"Yes, and now I've told you how bad it is to turn away."

"Why, did I—?" Yelena began.

"Didn't you?"

Yelena coloured slightly and held out her hand. Shubin shook it with feeling.

"It looks as if you had trapped me in a reprehensible sentiment," said Yelena, "but your suspicion is groundless. I didn't dream of shunning you."

"Granted. But you must own that at this very moment there are a thousand thoughts in your mind of which you wouldn't confide a single one to me. Well? Isn't it so?"

"Perhaps it is."

"But why? Why?"

"I don't understand my own thoughts," replied Yelena.

"That's just why you should confide them to somebody," said Shubin. "But I'll tell you why you don't do it. It's because you don't think much of me."

"I?"

"Yes. You imagine that whatever I do is half pretence because I'm an artist; that I'm incapable of any deed—you are probably right on that score—or even of any real, deep feeling; that I can't even cry sincerely; that I'm a chatterbox and a gossip—all because I'm an artist. What a miserable, God-forsaken class of people we artists are! I'll wager you don't believe in my repentance, for one thing."

"You are wrong, Pavel Yakovlevich, I do believe in your repentance, and in your tears too. But I have an idea that you're enjoying your own repentance, and your tears."

Shubin winced.

"Well, I see this is, to use medical language, a hopeless case—*casus incurabilis*," he thought. "All I can do is to bow my head in submission. And yet, Lord! Can it be that I keep making a fuss of myself, even though there is this wonderful soul living beside me? To know that I'll never penetrate that soul, that I'll never know why it is sad or merry, what is stirring in it, what it hankers after, where it's going!"

"Tell me," he said after a brief pause, "do you think you could never, under any circumstances, fall in love with an artist?"

Yelena looked him straight in the eyes.

"I don't think I could, Pavel Yakovlevich."

"Which was to be proved," said Shubin in mock dismay. "Whereupon it would beseem me, I take it, not to disturb your solitary walk any more. A professor would have asked you, 'And what are your reasons for saying

re?' But I'm not a professor, I'm a child to you; only, one doesn't turn away from children—remember that. Good-bye! May I rest in peace!"

Yelena was on the point of stopping him, but she thought better of it and said in her turn, "Good-bye."

Shubin walked out of the courtyard. A little distance from the Stakhov *dacha* he came upon Bersenev, who was walking briskly along, his head bowed and his hat shoved back.

"Andrei Petrovich!" Shubin called.

Bersenev stopped.

"Go on, go on," Shubin continued, "it's all right, I didn't mean to stop you. Go straight into the garden—you'll find Yelena there. I think she's waiting for you—anyway she's waiting for somebody. Do you understand how much these words mean: she is waiting? And you know what I guess? Just imagine, I've been living in the same house with her for two years, I'm in love with her, but it wasn't until this very moment that I really saw—I won't say understood—her. I saw her, and was taken aback. Please don't look at me with that pseudo-sarcastic smile which ill befits your dignified features. Oh, yes, I know—you would like to remind me of Annushka. What of it? I won't deny it. Annushkas are just the thing for the likes of me. So long live the Annushkas and Zoyas, and even the Augustina Christianovnas! You go to Yelena now, and I'll pay a visit to—did you think to Annushka? No, old man, it's worse than that; I'm going to Prince Chikunsov's. There's a patron of art by that name, a Kazan Tatar, who could be another Mäcen. Do you see this letter of invitation and these initials, *P.S.V.P.*? They won't leave me alone even here in the country! *Addio.*"

Bersenev listened to Shubin's harangue in silence, as though embarrassed on his friend's account, then he entered the Stakhov courtyard. As for Shubin, he did go to

Prince Chikurasov's, to whom he said a lot of the most bitingly impudent things with the most amiable air. The Tatar Maecenas guffawed, and his guests laughed, yet none of them was really amused, and when they broke up everyone was as cross as a bear. It is thus that two gentlemen, who hardly know each other, bare their teeth in a forced grin upon meeting in Nevsky Avenue, pucker up their eyes, nose and cheeks, and then, passing on, at once resume their former expression, usually indifferent or sullen.

X

Yelena gave Bersenev a friendly welcome—she was already in the drawing-room—and at once took up again, almost impatiently, the conversation they had started the day before. She was alone, Stakhov having slipped quietly away, and Anna Vasilyevna lying upstairs, with a damp bandage round her head. Zoya was sitting by her side, her skirt smoothed out neatly and her hands folded in her lap. Uvar Ivanovich was napping in the attic, on a broad, cosy sofa nicknamed "Luller." Bersenev mentioned again his father, whose memory he held sacred. It would be appropriate to say a few words about him here.

Owner of eighty-two serfs, whom he released before his death, an Illuminate educated at Göttingen, and author of *Manifestations or Pre-formations of the Spirit in the World*, a work in which Schelling, Swedenborg, and republicanism were lumped together in a most original fashion, Bersenev's father brought him to Moscow immediately after the death of the boy's mother, and took personal charge of his education. He prepared every lesson, working with extraordinary diligence and without any success whatsoever. A dreamy bookworm and mystic, he spoke in a stumbling, toneless voice, using obscure and

florid language, mostly in the form of comparisons, and was shy even with his son, whom he loved with all his heart. Small wonder that his son just stared at him during the lessons, and did not make the least progress. Finally the old man, who was about fifty then, having married very late, saw that it would not do, and placed Andrei in a boarding-school. Andrei began to study properly, but he was not exempted from his father's supervision; his father paid him continuous visits, pestering the principal with his exhortations and discourses. The form-masters also regarded the unbidden guest as a nuisance —every now and again he brought them what they called high and dry books on education. Even the schoolboys felt uneasy at sight of the old man's dark, pock-marked face, of his scraggy figure, always attired in a queer sort of grey morning coat with pointed tails. They had no inkling that the heart of the glum, unsmiling gentleman with a long nose and the gait of a crane went out to them in love and sympathy almost as much as it did to his own son. Once it occurred to him to have a chat with them about Washington. "My youthful friends!" he began, but no sooner had the youthful friends heard his strange voice than they scattered pell-mell. The good Göttingenian trod a path strewn with anything but roses, being constantly depressed by the trend of history, and by all sorts of problems and considerations. After the young Bersenev had entered the university, his father accompanied him to the lectures; but his health had begun to fail him. The events of 1848 came as a great shock to him—he was faced with the necessity of thoroughly revising his book —and he died in the winter of 1853, before his son was graduated, but after congratulating him in advance and blessing his son's decision to serve science. "I am handing you a torch," he said to Andrei, two hours before his death, "which I have carried as long as I could. You, too, must carry this torch forward till your last breath."

Bersenev told Yelena a great deal about his father. He no longer felt awkward in her presence, nor did he lisp so much. The conversation drifted to the university.

"Tell me," said Yelena, "were there any remarkable people among your fellow-students?"

Bersenev recalled what Shubin had told him.

"Well, no, Yelena Nikolayevna, to tell the truth, there weren't. Indeed, how could there have been any! They say things used to be different at Moscow University. But it's no longer its former self. Today it is a school, not a university. I didn't get on well with my fellow-students," he added, lowering his voice.

"You didn't?" whispered Yelena.

"However," Bersenev went on, "I ought to make a reservation. I know a student—he was in a different year, though—who *is* a remarkable man."

"What's his name?" Yelena asked with lively interest.

"Dmitry Nikanorovich Insarov. A Bulgarian."

"He isn't a Russian?"

"No, he isn't."

"Then why does he live in Moscow?"

"He came here to study. Do you know what he wants an education for? The idea uppermost in his mind is to liberate his country. And his life has been an unusual one. His father was a rather prosperous merchant of Tirnovo. Tirnovo is a small town today, but it was the capital of Bulgaria when she was still an independent kingdom. He did business in Sofia and had connections with Russia. His sister, Insarov's aunt, still lives in Kiev; she's married to a teacher of history. In 1835, that is, eighteen years ago, a heinous crime was committed: Insarov's mother disappeared suddenly; a week later she was found dead, with her throat cut."

Yelena shuddered. Bersenev paused.

"Go on, go on," she brought out.

"It was rumoured that the Turkish aga had kidnapped

and murdered her. Her husband, Insarov's father, found out all about it, and tried to take his revenge, but all he could do was to wound the aga with a dagger. He was shot."

"Shot? You mean without trial?"

"Yes. Insarov was in his eighth year then. He was taken in charge by neighbours. His aunt learned about the fate of her brother's family, and asked her nephew to be sent to her. He was brought to Odessa, and from there to Kiev. He lived fully twelve years in Kiev. That's why he speaks Russian so well."

"He speaks Russian?"

"As well as you and I. When he had turned twenty—that was in early '48—he decided to go back to his country. He went to Sofia and Tirnovo, and wandered all over Bulgaria; he spent two years there and relearned his mother tongue. The Turkish Government persecuted him, and I imagine he was exposed to great hazards during those two years. Once I saw a large scar on his neck, probably the mark of a wound; but he doesn't like to talk about it. He is close-mouthed in his own way. I tried to ask him questions, but got nowhere—he gave me non-committal answers. He's terribly stubborn. In 1850 he came back to Russia to complete his education, become intimate with the Russians, and then, upon graduation—"

"What then?" Yelena interrupted.

"Then he'll see. It's hard to predict."

For a long time Yelena gazed at Bersenev.

"You have told me a most interesting story," she said. "What is he like—did you say his name was Insarov?"

"I think he's rather good-looking. But you will see for yourself."

"How is that?"

"I'm going to bring him here. He is moving to our village the day after tomorrow, and will share lodgings with me."

"Not really? But would he care to come here?"

"Would he care! He'd be happy to come."

"Is he proud?"

"Proud? Not at all. That is, he *is* proud, only in a different sense. For example, he would never borrow money from anybody."

"Is he poor?"

"He certainly isn't rich. During his stay in Bulgaria he scraped together a few crumbs left from his father's property, and, besides, his aunt helps him; but that's hardly anything."

"He must have plenty of character," remarked Yelena.

"Yes, he's a man of iron. And yet, you will see that, for all his concentration and even reticence, there's something childishly sincere in him. Of course, his sincerity is not our paltry kind, it isn't the sincerity of people who have absolutely nothing to conceal. But wait till I bring him here."

"He isn't shy, is he?" Yelena asked.

"No. It's only touchy people who are shy."

"Why, are you touchy?"

Bersenev gave her an embarrassed look.

"You have excited my curiosity," Yelena continued. "But tell me, did he revenge himself on the Turkish aga?"

Bersenev smiled.

"That's only done in novels, Yelena Nikolayevna; besides, the aga might have died during the last twelve years."

"But Mr. Insarov hasn't told you anything about it, has he?"

"No."

"What did he go to Sofia for?"

"His father lived there."

Yelena mused.

"To liberate his country!" she said. "The very sound of these words is terrible, so great are they."

Just then Anna Vasilyevna came in, and the conversation broke off.

That evening Berseniev had a strange sensation as he walked home. He did not regret his intention to introduce Insarov to Yelena, and he found it quite natural that his story of the young Bulgarian should have impressed her so deeply; indeed, had he not tried to enhance that impression? But a secret, dark feeling lurked in his heart, and he was sad with an unholy sadness. That sadness did not, however, stop him from picking up *A History of the Hohenstaufens* and resuming his reading from the page at which he had left off the day before.

XI

Insarov arrived with his luggage at Berseniev's two days later, as he had promised. He had no servant, but without help from anyone he tidied his room and rearranged the furniture. He spent a long time on the desk, which, try as he might, would not get into the space assigned to it between the two windows; but Insarov, with his habitual silent tenacity, had his way. Having settled down, he asked Berseniev to take an advance of ten rubles on the rent and, equipping himself with a stout stick, set out to explore the surroundings of his new home. Upon his return some three hours later Berseniev asked him to share his meal; he replied that he was willing, but that in the future he would be getting his board from the landlady, with whom he had made a suitable arrangement.

"But look here," replied Berseniev, "you'll be served abominable meals, because that woman simply can't cook. Why don't you want to have your meals with me? We could go halves on the expenses."

"I can't afford the kind of food you have," Insarov answered, smiling calmly.

His smile had a quality that forbade any insistence, and Bersenev did not utter another word. After dinner he suggested a visit to Stakhov's, but Insarov said he proposed to devote all evening to writing letters to his countrymen, and therefore asked him to put off the visit. Bersenev had known before how inflexible Insarov was; but he did not discover until they began to live under the same roof that Insarov never changed his mind, just as he never postponed the fulfilment of a promise. As a genuine Russian, Bersenev at first considered this more-than-German thoroughness rather absurd, even comical; but before long he got accustomed to it and finished by finding it very convenient if not commendable.

On the day following his arrival, Insarov rose at four o'clock in the morning, made a quick tour of most of Kountsovo, bathed in the river, drank a glass of cold milk, and got to work. He had plenty of work to do, too: he studied Russian history, law, and political economy, translated Bulgarian songs and chronicles, collected data on the Near East problem, and had undertaken to compile a Russian grammar for Bulgarians, and a Bulgarian one for Russians. Bersenev dropped in for a chat about Feuerbach. Insarov lent him an attentive ear, his few but apt comments indicating that he was trying to make up his mind as to whether he should take up Feuerbach or whether he could do without him. Bersenev brought up Insarov's work and asked to be shown something of what he had done. Insarov read to him translations he had made of two or three Bulgarian songs, and asked what he thought of them. Bersenev said he found the translations accurate but not expressive enough. Insarov accepted the criticism. From songs Bersenev turned to the situation in Bulgaria, and for the first time became aware of the great change which came over Insarov at the mere mention of his country; not that his face lit up, or that he raised his voice, but his whole being seemed to gather

strength and strain forward, his lips became sharper and grimmer in outline, while his eyes shone with a hidden, unquenchable fire. Although Insarov did not like to enlarge on his own trip to Bulgaria, he was willing to talk of his country with anyone. He spoke unhurriedly about the Turks, the persecutions they resorted to, the sorrows and misfortunes of his countrymen, and their hopes; his every word was tense with the concentrated force of a single, long-sustained passion.

"Perhaps that Turkish aga did pay for the death of Insarov's parents, after all," thought Bersenev.

Before Insarov had finished the door opened, and Shubin appeared on the threshold.

He entered looking somehow much too confident and good-humoured; Bersenev, who knew him only too well, at once realized that something was eating him.

"May I introduce myself without ceremony," Shubin began with a frank, bright look on his face. "My name is Shubin, I'm a friend of this young man here." He pointed at Bersenev. "You are Mr. Insarov, aren't you?"

"Yes, that is my name."

"Then give me your hand and let's get acquainted. I don't know whether Bersenev has told you anything about me, but he's told me a lot about you. So you've moved here from town? Splendid! Please don't take it amiss that I'm staring at you. I happen to be a sculptor by trade, and I feel that very soon I shall be asking your permission to model your head."

"My head is at your disposal," said Insarov.

"Well, what are we going to do today?" asked Shubin, sitting on a low chair and propping his hands on his knees, set wide apart. "Andrei Petrovich, has Your Excellency laid any plans for today? The weather's lovely; it smells of hay and dry strawberries, as if - as if you were drinking mallow tea. We ought to get up some fun.

Let us show the new inhabitant of Kountsovo its numerous beauties." ("He *is* fretting," Bersenev told himself.) "Well, why don't you say something, my friend Horatio? Come, open your prophetic mouth. Shall we get up some fun or shan't we?"

"I don't know about Insarov," remarked Bersenev. "I think he's going to work."

Shubin turned on his chair.

"Were you going to work?" he asked in a voice that had a sort of twang in it.

"No," replied Insarov, "today I'm free to go on a ramble."

"Oh!" said Shubin. "That's splendid. Go, my friend Andrei Petrovich, cover your wise head with a hat, and let's follow our noses. Our noses are young and they'll take us far. I know a beastly little restaurant where we'll be served an execrable meal; but it's going to be fun just the same. Come along."

Half an hour later the three were sauntering along the Moskva. Insarov was wearing a rather strange-looking, flap-eared cap which sent Shubin into raptures that were not quite spontaneous. Insarov walked along with unhurried step, and looked and breathed and talked and smiled with the greatest calm, for, having decided that the day was to be given up to pleasure, he was enjoying himself thoroughly. "This is how well-behaved boys spend their Sundays," Shubin whispered in Bersenev's ear. Shubin frolicked for all he was worth, ran on ahead, struck the attitudes of famous statues, and turned somersaults on the grass; not that he resented Insarov's calm, but it made him act like a clown. "Why are you so fidgety, Frenchman?" Bersenev asked him once or twice. "Yes, I'm French—half French," replied Shubin, "and as for you, you'd better keep between jest and earnest, as a waiter I knew used to tell me." The three young men turned away from the river and walked up a deep, narrow

ditch, between two walls of tall golden rye, one of which cast a bluish shadow upon them. The radiant sun seemed to glide over the rye; the air was vibrant with the songs of skylarks and the shrilling of quails; the warm wind stirred the grass that spread in a green carpet all around them, and rocked the heads of flowers. After much rambling, halts, and talk —Shubin even tried to play leap-frog with a toothless peasant who chanced to be passing and who laughed at the gentleman's pranks—the young men reached the "beastly" little restaurant. The waiter all but knocked them down, and served them a very poor dinner indeed, with some sort of trans-Balkan wine, something which, however, did not prevent them from having a good time, as predicted by Shubin, who was the loudest and least merry of all. He drank to the health of the "incomprehensible but great Venelin," and of "the Bulgarian king Kroom, Khroom, or Khrom, who reigned almost in Adam's day."

"In the ninth century," Insarov corrected him.

"In the ninth century!" cried Shubin. "Oh, felicity!"

Berseney had noticed that, for all his pranks and tricks and jokes, Shubin was, as it were, testing and probing into Insarov, that he was inwardly agitated, while Insarov remained as serene as ever.

At last they returned home, changed, and, to round off the day, decided to call at Stakhov's in the evening. Shubin hurried off to announce the visit.

XII

"Insarov the hero will be here in a moment," he exclaimed, stepping into the Stakhov drawing-room, where he found only Yelena and Zoya.

"*Wer*?" Zoya asked in German. When caught unawares, she always spoke her mother tongue. Yelena straight-

ened up. Shubin looked at her, a meaningful smile on his lips. She was annoyed, but did not say anything.

"Did you hear?" he said. "Mr. Insarov is coming."

"I did," she answered, "and I also heard what you called him. You surprise me, really. Mr. Insarov has never set foot here before, and yet you see fit to play the clown."

Shubin drooped at once.

"You are right, Yelena Nikolayevna—you always are," he stammered. "But I didn't mean any harm, believe me. We've spent all day rambling with him, and I assure you he's an excellent fellow."

"I didn't ask you about that," said Yelena, and rose.

"Is Mr. Insarov young?" asked Zoya.

"He's a hundred and forty-four," Shubin snapped.

The boy-servant announced the two friends. They came in. Bersenev introduced Insarov. Yelena asked them to be seated, and sat down herself, while Zoya went upstairs to tell Anna Vasilyevna. They began to exchange insignificant remarks as people do when just introduced. Shubin sat in a corner, watching, but there was nothing to watch. All that he noticed in Yelena was a trace of repressed annoyance at himself. Looking at Bersenev and Insarov, he compared their faces from a sculptor's point of view. "Neither is handsome," he thought. "The Bulgarian has a typical face, easy to model; there, it's well lighted now. The Russian's face is better suited for painting—it has character but no lines. I should say they are both rather lovable. She is sure to fall in love with Bersenev, though she doesn't love him yet," he said to himself. Anna Vasilyevna appeared in the drawing-room, and the conversation took an absolutely *dacha*—not countryside but *dacha*—turn. It abounded in topics but was broken by brief, rather painful pauses every two or three minutes. During one of those pauses Anna Vasilyevna turned to Zoya. Shubin understood the hint, and pulled a sour face,

while Zoya sat down at the piano and played and sang all her little things. Uvar Ivanovich appeared in the doorway, only to twiddle his fingers and withdraw again. Tea was served, and then the whole company strolled round the garden....

Night fell, and the visitors left.

The impression which Insarov made on Yelena was not so strong as she had expected, or, to be exact, it was different from what she had expected. She was taken with his straightforward and unconstrained manner, and she liked his face; however, Insarov's entire being, calm and firm and plainly unassuming, was somehow out of keeping with the image which she had formed of him from Bersenev's description. Unwittingly she had expected something "magnetic." "He didn't speak much today," she thought, "but that was my fault, I didn't ask him any questions. I'll wait till next time. His eyes are certainly expressive—he has the eyes of an upright man." She felt like giving him a friendly hand, not bending her knee to him, and she was puzzled, for she had had a different idea of men like Insarov—of "heroes." The latter word reminded her of Shubin, and she blushed angrily as she lay in bed.

"What do you think of your new acquaintances?" Bersenev asked Insarov as they walked homewards.

"I think they are very nice people," answered Insarov, "particularly the daughter. She must be a fine girl. She's emotional, but her emotion is sincere."

"We ought to see them often," remarked Bersenev.

"Yes," replied Insarov, and said no more until they got home. He at once locked himself up, but there was a candle burning in his room well after midnight.

Bersenev had scarcely read a page of Raumer when a handful of fine sand struck his window-pane. He started, opened the window, and saw Shubin, pale as a sheet.

"What a fidget you are! Just like a moth!" Bersenev began.

"Hist!" Shubin interrupted, "I've come by stealth, as Max went to Agatha. I must absolutely have a word with you in private."

"Well, come up."

"There's no need for that," replied Shubin, and leant on the window-sill. "It's more fun this way—more like Spain. In the first place, my congratulations: your shares are up. Your wonder-man has failed. I can vouch for it. And to show you how impartial I am, let me give you Mr. Insarov's particulars. No talent, no flair for poetry, a tremendous ability to work, a capacious memory, an intellect that's neither versatile nor deep, but is sound and alert; he's dry and forceful, and even eloquent when his own Bulgaria is concerned—a most dreary country, between you and me. Well? Can you say I'm being unfair? One more comment: you'll never be on familiar terms with him, and nobody has ever been; he detests me for being an artist, which I am proud of. He is dry as straw, but he could crush all of us to powder. He's bound up with his country, and that's where he differs from our own empty shells, which try to ingratiate themselves with the people, as if to say, 'Fill us, O fountain of life!' But then his task is simpler, and easier to grasp: all they have to do is throw out the Turks—not much of a feat! But all these qualities don't appeal to women, thank God. He lacks fascination, *charme*—unlike you or me."

"Where do I come in?" Bersenev murmured. "And you are wrong about other things, too, because he doesn't detest you in the least, and he is on familiar terms with his countrymen—I know that."

"But that's another story! To them he's a hero; as for me, I must confess that my idea of a hero is different: a hero mustn't know how to speak, he must only bellow like a bull; for that matter, he has only to butt a wall with his

horns to bring it down in a heap. Nor must he know why he uses his horns—he must just use them. It may well be, however, that our times call for heroes of a different calibre."

"Why are you so preoccupied with Insarov?" asked Bersenev. "You can't have come running here only to describe his character to me?"

"I came because I felt awfully downhearted at home," said Shubin.

"Is that so? I hope you won't start crying again."

"You may laugh at me if you like. I've come here because I'm ready to tear my hair, because I'm desperate, because I'm jealous and vexed—"

"Jealous of whom?"

"Of you, and him, and everybody else. It's torture to think that if I had understood her before, if I had known how to go about it— Oh, what's the use! In the end I'll laugh and jest and play the clown, as she says, and then go and string myself up."

"Stringing yourself up is the one thing you won't do," remarked Bersenev.

"Not on a night like this, of course; but wait till autumn comes. People do die on a night like this, too, but they die of happiness. Ah, happiness! Every shadow stretching across the path from a tree seems to be whispering, 'I know where happiness is. Do you want me to tell you?' I'd ask you to take a walk with me, but you are now under the spell of prose. Go to bed, and may you see mathematical formulas in your dreams! But *my* heart is bleeding. When you gentlemen see somebody laughing you think life is light on him; you can prove that he contradicts himself and therefore isn't suffering. All right, have it your way!"

Shubin hurried away from the window. Bersenev was about to call out "Annushka!" after him, but checked himself, for Shubin's face was distorted with suffering. A mo-

ment later Bersenev even fancied he heard sobs; he got up and opened the window. It was quiet outside, except that someone, probably a passing rustic, was singing *Mozdok Steppe* far away.

XIII

During the first fortnight after moving to the vicinity of Kountsovo, Insarov did not call on the Stakhovs more than four or five times. Bersenev saw them every other day. Yelena was glad to have him, and their conversations were always lively and interesting; still he often went home looking sad. Shubin hardly ever turned up. Applying himself to his art with feverish vigour, he either sat locked up in his room, whence he would come out wearing a smock and besmirched with clay from head to foot, or spent his time in his Moscow studio, where he was visited by models, Italian moulders, friends, and instructors. Yelena had not yet had a chance to speak with Insarov as she would have liked to; in his absence she would think up all sorts of questions to ask him, but when he came she would be ashamed of her preparations. Abashed by Insarov's very calm, she imagined she had no right to draw him out, and decided to bide her time; for all that she felt that with his every visit, however insignificant the words they exchanged, she was attracted to him more and more. But she had had no opportunity to remain alone with him, whereas, in order to know a person better, one must talk with him privately at least once. She discussed him a great deal with Bersenev, who realized that Insarov had struck her imagination, and was glad to see that his friend had not failed, contrary to Shubin's assertion. Enthusiastically and at great length, he told her all that he knew about Insarov (often, being eager to win someone's good graces, we extol our friends, hardly suspecting that we thereby extol our own

selves), and it was only occasionally, when a light colour came into Yelena's cheeks and her eyes shone and opened wider, that the wicked sadness he had once already experienced gripped his heart.

One day Bersenev called at Stakhov's just after ten o'clock in the morning, which was an unusual hour. Yelena came out to meet him in the drawing-room.

"Just imagine," he began, with a forced smile, "our friend Insarov's disappeared."

"Disappeared?" Yelena faltered.

"Yes. He left the day before yesterday, and hasn't come back since."

"Did he tell you where he was going?"

"No."

Yelena sank down on a chair.

"He must have gone to Moscow," she murmured, trying to look indifferent and wondering why she should be doing it.

"I don't think so," replied Bersenev. "He didn't go alone."

"Who else was there?"

"The day before yesterday, just before dinner, he was visited by two men—his compatriots, I suppose."

"Bulgarians? What makes you think so?"

"As far as I could hear, they spoke a Slavonic language, though I don't know it. Now you find, Yelena Nikolayevna, that Insarov isn't enough of a mystery; but what could be more mysterious than that visit? Just think—they walked into his room and started shouting and arguing fiercely. He shouted too."

"Did he?"

"Yes. He shouted at them. They seemed to be complaining of each other. If only you had seen those visitors! They had dark, hook-nosed faces with prominent cheekbones; both were probably past forty, poorly dressed, dusty and sweaty, and they looked like nothing on

earth—neither artisans nor gentlemen. Heaven knows what sort of people they are."

"And he went with them?"

"Yes. He offered them some food, and left with them. The landlady told me that between them the two men ate up a huge potful of porridge. She said they gobbled it like two wolves trying to outstrip each other."

Yelena smiled faintly.

"I'm sure all that will dissolve into something exceedingly prosaic," she said.

"I wish it would. Only you shouldn't have used that word. There is nothing prosaic in Insarov, even though Shubin insists—"

"Shubin, indeed!" Yelena interrupted, with a shrug. "You must admit, however, that the two gentlemen gobbling their porridge—"

"Themistocles ate too, on the eve of the Battle of Salamis," Bersenev observed with a smile.

"True; but then there *was* a battle on the following day. Anyway, let me know when he comes back," she added, and tried to change the topic, but the conversation flagged.

Zoya came in and tiptoed about the room, thus suggesting that Anna Vasilyevna was still asleep.

Bersenev left.

In the evening a note was brought to Yelena from him.

"He is back," it read, "sunburnt and covered with dust up to his eyebrows. But I have no idea where he has been or why. Could you find that out?"

" 'Could you find that out'!" Yelena whispered. "Does he ever talk to me?"

XIV

Next afternoon Yelena was standing in front of a small kennel in the garden, where she kept two puppies. The gardener had found them abandoned near the fence,

and had brought them to her, because some washerwomen had told him that she pitied all kinds of beasts. He was not mistaken in his calculations, for Yelena gave him twenty-five kopeks for the puppies.

She peeped into the kennel and satisfied herself that the two puppies were getting along nicely and that some fresh straw had been spread on the kennel floor; then she turned, and almost cried out in surprise, for she saw Insarov, all alone, coming down the path.

"Good afternoon," he said, drawing near and taking off his cap. She noticed that his face was indeed sunburnt. "I wanted to come with Andrei Petrovich, but he wasn't ready yet, and I started alone. There's no one in your house, everybody's sleeping or taking a walk, and so here I am."

"That sounds like an apology," replied Yelena. "You needn't apologize. We are all very glad to see you. Let us sit on the bench, here in the shade."

She sat down, and Insarov sat beside her.

"I understand you had been away from home during the last few days?" she said.

"Yes, I had," he answered. "Did Andrei Petrovich tell you?"

Insarov glanced at her, smiled, and toyed with his cap. As he smiled he blinked rapidly and stuck out his lips, which gave him a most good-natured look.

"Andrei Petrovich must also have told you that I left with two—er—uncouth men," he said, still smiling.

Yelena felt a little ill at ease, but the next moment she realized that one should always tell Insarov the truth.

"Yes," she said firmly.

"And what did you think of me?" he asked suddenly.

Yelena looked up at him.

"I thought," she answered, "well, I thought you always knew what you were doing, and were incapable of doing anything wrong."

"Thank you for saying so. You see, Yelena Nikolayevna," he began in a confidential tone, moving up to her, "we make up a small family here, and some of us have little education, but all are devoted to the common cause. Unfortunately, we cannot get along without quarrelling, and as everybody knows and trusts me, I was called to settle a quarrel. I had to go."

"Was it far from here?"

"I went to Troitsky Posad, about sixty versts from here. There are some people of ours there at the monastery. Anyway, it wasn't a waste of time—I patched it up."

"Was it difficult?"

"Yes. One of them wouldn't come round. He refused to give up some money."

"What! Do you mean to say they quarrelled over money?"

"Yes, and it wasn't much money, either. Did you think it was something else?"

"You went as far as that for so trifling a matter? And wasted three days on it?"

"It's never a trifling matter, Yelena Nikolayevna, when my countrymen are involved. It would have been wrong to refuse. I can see that you don't refuse help even to pups, and I commend you for it. There is no harm in my having lost time. I can make up for it. Our time doesn't belong to us."

"Whom does it belong to, then?"

"To those who need us. I'm coming out with all this because I value your opinion. I can imagine how Andrei Petrovich must have surprised you."

"You value my opinion," said Yelena under her breath. "But why?"

Insarov smiled again.

"Because you are a nice young lady, not an aristocrat —that's why."

There was a little pause.

"Dmitry Nikanorovich," said Yelena, "do you know this is the first time you've been so frank with me?"

"Is it, now? I thought I had always told you what was on my mind."

"No, this is the first time, and I'm very glad of it and want to be frank with you in my turn. May I?"

Insarov laughed and said, "You may."

"I warn you that I'm very inquisitive."

"Never mind, speak up."

"Andrei Petrovich has told me a great deal about your life—your youth. I know of a certain circumstance, a dreadful circumstance— I know that afterwards you went back to your country. For heaven's sake don't answer me if you think my question indiscreet, but there is something which has been tormenting me— Tell me, did you ever meet that man—?"

Yelena's breath caught. She was both ashamed of and horrified by her own audacity. Insarov was gazing at her, his eyes slightly screwed up as he fingered his chin.

"Yelena Nikolayevna," he began at last, and his voice was lower than usual, which nearly frightened Yelena. "I know what man you mean. No, I didn't meet him, and thank God for it. I wasn't looking for him. Not that I thought I had no right to kill him—I should have killed him with a calm conscience —but there should be no place for personal revenge when it's a question of the vengeance of the people—that isn't the right word, though—when it's a question of liberating the people. The one would have hindered the other. The day will come for that too. For that too," he repeated, and shook his head.

Yelena looked at him sideways.

"Do you love your country very much?" she asked timidly.

"That remains to be seen," he answered. "Not until someone of us has died for his country will it be possible to say he loved it."

"So if you were prevented from going back to Bulgaria," Yelena continued, "you would find life hard in Russia?"

Insarov hung his head.

"I don't think I could stand that," he said.

"Tell me," Yelena began again, "is it difficult to learn Bulgarian?"

"Not at all. A Russian should be ashamed of not knowing Bulgarian. A Russian ought to know all the Slav dialects. Would you like me to bring you some Bulgarian books? You would see how easy the language is. And the songs we have! They're not a bit worse than Serbian songs. But let me translate one of them for you. It's about— Are you at all familiar with our history?"

"No, I know nothing about it," answered Yelena.

"I'll bring you a book then. It will give you the main facts at least. And now listen to the song. However, I think I had better bring you a written translation. I'm sure you will like us, because you like all the oppressed. If you knew what a bountiful country ours is! And yet it is being trampled underfoot and its people tortured," he added, with an involuntary movement of his hand, and his face clouded. "We've been robbed of everything—our churches, our rights and our lands; the heathen Turks treat us like cattle, they butcher us—"

"Dmitry Nikanorovich!" Yelena exclaimed.

He paused.

"Please forgive me. I cannot talk about it coolly. But you were asking me just now whether I loved my country. Why, what else can one love? What alone is immutable, what is above all doubt, what is it that one cannot but believe in next to God? And when that country of yours needs you— Mark that the humblest peasant, the lowliest pauper in Bulgaria and I wish one and the same thing. We have all the same goal. Think of the confidence and strength it gives us."

Insarov was silent for a moment, and then continued to speak of Bulgaria. Yelena listened to him with rapt but sad attention. When he had finished she asked him once more, "So nothing could have made you stay in Russia?"

For a long time after he had left she followed him with her eyes. That day he had become a different man to her. The man whom she had just been talking to was not the same as she had met two hours earlier.

From that day on he called on her more and more often, while Bersenev became a rather rare visitor. Something strange had crept in between the two friends, which both of them sensed quite distinctly but could not name, and which they were afraid to talk about. A month passed thus.

XV

As the reader knows, Anna Vasilyevna liked to stay at home; but once in a while, and quite unexpectedly, she was seized with an irresistible desire for something unusual, some extraordinary *partie de plaisir;* and she was all the more thrilled the more that *partie de plaisir* was difficult to arrange, the more preparation and packing it called for, and the more anxiety it caused to Anna Vasilyevna herself. If the whim took her in winter she would have two or three boxes reserved and would go to the theatre, or even to a masked ball, with all her friends and acquaintances; in summer she would undertake an outing to some distant place in the country. Next day she would groan and complain of headache and stay in bed, but some two months later she would be thirsting again for something "unusual." That was what happened this time, too. Someone mentioned the beauties of Tsaritsyno in her presence, and she promptly announced that she was going to Tsaritsyno the day after tomor-

row. A hustle and bustle began in the house. A messenger galloped off to Moscow to fetch Stakhov; he was accompanied by a footman, who was to buy wine, pies, and all sorts of other victuals. Shubin was instructed to hire a carriage, for the coach was insufficient, and to procure more horses. Twice the boy-servant had to rush off to Bersenev and Insarov with invitations written first in Russian, then in French by Zoya. Anna Vasilyevna in person took care of the young ladies' travelling dresses. Meanwhile the *partie de plaisir* nearly fell through; Stakhov arrived from Moscow in a sour and *frondeuringly* cross mood—he was still at odds with Augustina Christianovna—and upon learning what it was all about, flatly declared that he was not going; that it would be absurd to race from Kountsovo to Moscow, then from Moscow to Tsaritsyno, then from Tsaritsyno back to Moscow, then from Moscow back to Kountsovo. "And lastly," he added, "let someone first prove to me that one point of the globe may be more fun than another, and then I will go." That was something which nobody could prove, and Anna Vasilyevna was on the point of giving up the *partie de plaisir* for lack of a dignified companion, but she thought of Uvar Ivanovich and sent for him in her distress, telling herself that a drowning man catches at a straw. He was awakened, and came down; he listened in silence to what Anna Vasilyevna had to propose, twiddled his fingers, and astounded everybody by accepting. Anna Vasilyevna kissed him on the cheek and called him a dear; Stakhov smiled contemptuously and said, "*Quelle bourde!*" He was fond of using "smart" French phrases whenever opportunity offered. Next morning at seven o'clock, the coach and the carriage, loaded to capacity, rolled out of the Stakhov courtyard. The coach was occupied by the ladies, the maid, and Bersenev; Insarov had mounted the box; the carriage bore Uvar Iva-

novich and Shubin. Uvar Ivanovich himself signed to Shubin with a finger to take a seat beside him; he knew that Shubin would tease him all the way to Tsaritsyno, but the "black-earth force" and the young artist were linked by a strange bond and gruff frankness. However, this time Shubin left his fat friend alone; he was taciturn, absent-minded, and gentle.

The sun stood high in an azure sky when the two vehicles pulled up at the unfinished Tsaritsyno Castle, which looked sombre and forbidding even at noon. The company alighted on the grass and at once moved on into the garden. Yelena, Zoya, and Insarov led the way; they were followed by Anna Vasilyevna leaning on Uvar Ivanovich's arm, her face beaming with perfect happiness. Uvar Ivanovich puffed and waddled, the new straw hat chafed his forehead, and his feet felt hot in the top-boots, but he, too, was enjoying himself. Shubin and Bersenev brought up the rear. "We'll be in the reserve, old man, like veterans," Shubin whispered to Bersenev. "She's in Bulgaria now," he added, indicating Yelena with his eyebrows.

It was a magnificent day. Everything was in bloom, everything hummed and sang; the ponds glittered in the distance; it all induced a radiant mood. "Oh, how lovely! Oh, how lovely!" Anna Vasilyevna kept on exclaiming. Uvar Ivanovich acknowledged her enthusiastic cries with a slight nod, and once he even said, "You bet!" Yelena exchanged an occasional remark with Insarov; Zoya held the broad brim of her hat with two fingers as she walked along, skittishly thrusting forward, from under a pink barège dress, her little feet in light-grey, blunt-toed shoes, and kept on glancing aside or back. "Oh!" Shubin exclaimed suddenly in an undertone, "I think Zoya Nikitichna's looking back. I'd better go to her. Yelena Nikolayevna despises me now, and you, Andrei Petrovich, she respects, which is the same thing. I'm going; I've moped

more than enough. As for you, old man, I advise you to botanize—it's the best thing to do in your position; moreover, it will also do you good from the scientific point of view. Good-bye!" He ran up to Zoya, offered her his arm, saying "*Ihre Hand, Madame*," and they hurried ahead. Yelena halted, called Bersenev, and took his arm, continuing, however, to talk with Insarov. She asked him for the Bulgarian names of the lily of the valley, the maple, the oak, the lime-tree. ("Bulgaria!" poor Bersenev said to himself.)

Suddenly there was a cry ahead; everybody looked up, and saw Shubin's cigar-case flying into a shrub, thrown by Zoya's hand. "I'll get even with you for this yet!" he exclaimed. He made his way into the shrub, recovered his cigar-case, and went back to Zoya; however, he had no sooner drawn near her than his cigar-case flew over the path again. The prank was repeated four or five times; he kept on laughing and making terrible threats, but she just smiled slyly and giggled. Finally he caught her fingers and squeezed them so hard that she gave a squeak and blew at her fingers for a long time in mock anger, while he hummed something in her ear.

"Naughty young people," remarked Anna Vasilyevna cheerfully to Uvar Ivanovich.

He twiddled his fingers.

"How do you like Zoya Nikitichna?" Bersenev said to Yelena.

"What about Shubin?" she replied.

Meanwhile the company arrived at an arbour known as Bellevue, and stopped to admire the Tsaritsyno ponds. They stretched one after another for several versts, and dense woods loomed dark beyond them. The sward covering the hill-side down to the main pond tinged the water an unusually vivid, emerald green. The water did not swell or foam anywhere, not even near the bank; the smooth surface was not ruffled by so much as a ripple.

It was like a huge font filled with molten glass that had hardened into a heavy, clear mass, the sky had sunk to the bottom, and the curly trees looked motionlessly into its limpid depths. For a long time they stood admiring the view in silence—even Shubin was hushed, even Zoya was pensive. Finally they all decided to go boating. Shubin, Insarov, and Bersenev ran down the grassy slope, chasing one another. They found a large painted boat and two oarsmen, and called the ladies. The ladies went down to them; Uvar Ivanovich cautiously followed the ladies. There was a good deal of laughter while he stepped down into the boat and took a seat. "Mind you don't drown us, sir," said one of the oarsmen, a young snub-nosed chap in an Alexandrian shirt. "Hold your tongue, you rascal," replied Uvar Ivanovich. The boat cast off. The three young men laid hold of the oars, but Insarov was the only one who could row. Shubin suggested singing a Russian song in chorus, and himself struck up *Down Mother Volga*. Bersenev, Zoya, and even Anna Vasilyevna joined him (Insarov could not sing), but the result was somewhat discordant; the singers stumbled on the third verse, with Bersenev alone trying to continue in a bass: "Not a thing the water showed"; but presently he floundered too. The two oarsmen winked at each other and grinned. "It looks as if ladies and gentlemen don't know much about singing, doesn't it?" said Shubin, turning to them. The chap in the Alexandrian shirt merely tossed his head. "Just you wait, snub-nose," said Shubin, "we'll show you yet. Zoya Nikitichna, please sing Niedermeyer's *Le Lac* for us. Stop rowing, you!" The wet oars rose like wings and hovered in the air, dripping with a tinkling patter; the boat glided on a little farther and stopped, swinging round a little like a swan. Zoya made a show of reluctance. "*Allons*," said Anna Vasilyevna kindly. Zoya took off her hat and sang: "*O lac! l'année à peine a fini sa carrière...*"

Her voice, not strong but clear, floated over the mirror of the pond; each word resounded in the far-off woods; it seemed as though there, too, someone were singing in a clear and mysterious but inhuman, unearthly voice. When Zoya had finished, a loud *bravo* rang out of an arbour on the bank, and out rushed several red-faced Germans, who had come to Tsaritsyno to *kneipen*.* Some of them had discarded their frock-coats, neckties and even waistcoats, and they shouted *encore* so furiously that Anna Vasilyevna insisted on moving quickly on to the far end of the pond. But before the boat touched the bank, Uvar Ivanovich sprang another surprise on the company. Having noticed that in a certain part of the wood each sound was repeated by a particularly distinct echo, he suddenly began to shrill like a quail. Everyone was startled at first, but the next moment they enjoyed it genuinely, for Uvar Ivanovich shrilled very skilfully. Encouraged by his success, he tried to mew; but his mewing was not so good; he shrilled once more, surveyed the company, and fell silent. Shubin hugged and kissed him, but was pushed back. Just then the boat came alongside, and the company stepped out.

Meanwhile the coachman, the footman, and the maid brought the baskets from the coach and served a collation on the grass under some old lime-trees. They sat round the tablecloth and fell to the pie and other food. Appetites proved excellent and, besides, Anna Vasilyevna plied her guests with more food every now and then, insisting that it was very wholesome to eat in the open; she even addressed her exhortations to Uvar Ivanovich. "Don't you worry," he mumbled, his mouth chock-full. "Oh, what a beautiful day!" she exclaimed again and again. A striking change had come over her, as though she had thrown off twenty years. Bersenev said so to her.

* To carouse.—*Tr.*

"Yes," she said, "I was good enough in my day—always in the first dozen." Shubin, who sat beside Zoya, continually filled her glass with wine; she declined but he pressed her, and finished by emptying her glass himself, and then started it all over again; he also assured her that he wished to recline his head on her lap, but she would not allow him "so great a liberty." Yelena looked graver than anyone else, but in her heart there was a wonderful calm, such as she had not experienced for a long time. She felt infinitely kind, and she wanted to have by her side not only Insarov but also Bersenev. Andrei Petrovich was vaguely aware of what it meant, and heaved stealthy sighs.

The hours flew fast; evening drew near. Suddenly Anna Vasilyevna was seized with alarm. "Oh, dear, it's dreadfully late," she said. "You've had your food and drink, gentlemen; it's time we broke up." She grew fussy, and so did everyone else; they broke up and strolled towards the castle near which the vehicles were drawn up. Passing by the ponds, they halted to admire Tsaritsyno for the last time. The countryside was ablaze with the bright hues of sunset; the sky was crimson, and the leaves, stirring in the light wind that had just sprung up, glistened with iridescent colours, the distant waters glowed like molten gold; the small reddish towers and pavilions scattered over the park stood out sharply against the dark green of the trees. "Good-bye, Tsaritsyno, we shall never forget today's outing!" Anna Vasilyevna murmured. Just then, as though to bear out her last words, something occurred that was, indeed, not likely to be soon forgotten.

Anna Vasilyevna had scarcely said good-bye to Tsaritsyno when discordant exclamations, boisterous laughter, and shouts rang out a little way off, behind a lilac shrub, and a veritable band of dishevelled men, the selfsame lovers of singing who had applauded Zoya so

warmly, burst out on to the path. The gentlemen must have had a drop too much. They stopped at sight of the ladies; one of them, however, a giant with a bull's neck and bloodshot eyes, stepped forward and, lurching and bowing clumsily as he went, drew near Anna Vasilyevna, who was petrified with fright.

"*Bonjour, madame*," he said huskily. "How are you?"

Anna Vasilyevna started back.

"Why would you not," the giant continued, in broken Russian, "sing *encore* when our *Kompanie* cry *encore* and *bravo*?"

"That's it, why?" clamoured the company.

Insarov took a step forward, but Shubin stopped him and placed himself between Anna Vasilyevna and the German.

"Permit me, honourable stranger," he began, "to convey to you the genuine amazement which your behaviour causes to us all. As far as I can judge, you belong to the Saxon branch of the Caucasian race, hence we may presume that you are familiar with the rules of propriety, and yet you have accosted a lady without being introduced to her. Believe me, at some other time I should have been particularly happy to make your acquaintance, for I can see you have exceedingly well-developed bicepses, tricepses, and deltoids, so that, as a sculptor, I should have been happy to have you as my model. But this time I beg you to leave us in peace."

The "honourable stranger" heard out Shubin, his head cocked up contemptuously and his arms akimbo.

"I understand nothing from what you says," he said at last. "You thinks perhaps that I'm a cobbler or watchmaker? Ha! I'm *Offizier*, I'm an official, yes."

"I didn't doubt that," said Shubin.

"But *I* say this," the stranger went on, pushing him aside with his powerful arm as he might have removed a twig from his path, "I say: Why sang you not *encore*

when we cry *encore*? But now, this minute, I shall go, only I want that this *Fräulein*—not this *Madame*, no, this one I don't need—but this one, or this one"—he pointed at Yelena and Zoya—"gives me *einen Kuss*, as we say in German, a little kiss, yes; well, that is no harm."

"No, *einen Kuss*, it's no harm," the company joined in again.

"*Ja! der Sakramenter!*" muttered a German, who was completely tipsy, choking with laughter.

Zoya caught hold of Insarov's arm, but he wrenched it free, and planted himself squarely in front of the hulking jackanapes.

"Please go away," he said to the man, in low but sharp accents.

The German guffawed.

"How do you mean—away? I like this! Can't I go walk too? How do you mean that—away? Why away?"

"Because you dared molest a lady," said Insarov, and suddenly went pale, "because you are drunk."

"How? I am drunk? You hear it? *Hören Sie das, Herr Provisor?* I'm *Offizier*, and he dares— Now I demand *Satisfaktion! Einen Kuss will ich!*"

"If you take another step—" Insarov began.

"Well? What then?"

"I'll throw you into the water."

"Into the water? *Herr Je!* And that is all? All right, we'll see, it's very interesting, how you mean that, into the water—"

The *Offizier* lifted his hands and drew forward, but suddenly something extraordinary happened: he groaned, his huge form swayed and rose above the ground, his feet kicked in the air, and before the ladies could give a cry, indeed, before anyone realized what was happening, the *Offizier*, all the fifteen stone of him, splashed heavily into the pond and instantly disappeared in the seething water.

"Oh!" the ladies shrieked in unison.

"*Mein Gott!*" came from the other side.

A minute passed, and then a round head, plastered with wet hair, emerged from the water; it let out bubbles, did that head; two hands beat spasmodically close by the mouth.

"He'll drown—help him! Help him!" cried Anna Vasilyevna to Insarov, who stood panting on the bank, his feet set apart.

"He'll get out, all right," he said, with a scornful and cruel casualness. "Let us go," he added, taking Anna Vasilyevna's arm. "Come along, Uvar Ivanovich, Yelena Nikolayevna."

"Ah! Oh!" yelled the hapless German, who had managed to clutch at some reeds growing by the bank.

The others followed Insarov, and they had to walk past the "*Kompanie.*" The roisterers, however, having lost their leader, were cowed, and did not utter a word; only one, the bravest of them, muttered, with a slight toss of his head, "Well, now! This is—God knows what this is!" Another even took off his hat. Insarov seemed terrible to them, and with good reason, too, for there was an ominous, dangerous look on his face. The Germans rushed to their companion and pulled him out of the water; as soon as he found himself on firm ground he began to swear tearfully and to shout after "those Russian scoundrels" that he was going to lay a complaint against them, that he would appeal to His Excellency Count von Kieseritz in person.

But the "Russian scoundrels" hurried off to the castle, taking no heed of his vociferation. Everyone was silent as they crossed the park, except Anna Vasilyevna, who was groaning softly. But when they reached the vehicles they stopped, and peal after peal of irresistible laughter shook them as it might have shaken Homer's gods. The first to burst out laughing shrilly, like a madman,

was Shubin; he was followed by Bersenev, who chuckled merrily, then Zoya scattered her laughter in tiny beads, and Anna Vasilyevna cackled all of a sudden; even Yelena could not help smiling, and at last Insarov himself gave way. But the one who laughed louder, longer, and more violently than anyone was Uvar Ivanovich; he laughed till he got the stitch in his side and started sneezing and choking. He would subside for a few seconds, and say through his tears, "I –wondered—what it was that splashed— Then I saw—it was him—going down—" And when he had brought out the last word with a spasm, a fresh burst of laughter would rock his frame. Zoya did her best to egg him on. "I saw a pair of feet," she said, "kicking in the air—" "That's it!" Uvar Ivanovich broke in, "a pair of feet—and then flop! down he went!" "But how did he manage it? That German was three times his size!" said Zoya. "Well, I can tell you how he did it," Uvar Ivanovich replied, wiping his eyes. "I saw it all—he put one arm round the man's waist, tripped him, and then—flop! I wondered what it was I heard. It was him going down!"

Long after the vehicles had started on their way and Tsaritsyno Castle had dropped out of sight, Uvar Ivanovich was unable to subdue his hilarity. Finally he was admonished into silence by Shubin, who was once more sharing the carriage with him.

As for Insarov, he felt ashamed. He sat in the coach opposite Yelena—Bersenev had installed himself on the box—saying nothing; she, too, was silent. He thought she disapproved of him; but it was not so. She had been very frightened at first; then she had been struck by the expression of his face, which gave her much food for thought. She did not quite know herself what she was pondering over. The feeling she had had during the day was gone, and she realized it; but it had been succeeded by something else, which she could not define as yet. The

partie de plaisir had lasted too long, and evening passed imperceptibly into night. The coach raced on past fields of ripening corn, where the heavily fragrant air smelled of wheat, and past wide meadows that sent a sudden wave of freshness into the face. The sky seemed to be smoking along the horizon. Finally the moon floated up, wanly red. Anna Vasilyevna was dozing; Zoya looked at the road, leaning out of the window. It occurred to Yelena at last that she had not spoken to Insarov for more than an hour. She asked him a trivial question, and he at once responded joyfully. There came vague sounds, as of thousands of people talking far off; it was Moscow rushing to meet them. Lights glimmered ahead, growing in number; finally the wheels rattled upon cobblestones. Anna Vasilyevna woke up; in the coach everyone began to talk, although no one could make out what was said, because the wheels of the two vehicles and the thirty-two hoofs clattered noisily over the cobbles. The trip from Moscow to Kountsovo seemed interminable; the passengers slept or sat in silence, their heads snuggled into various corners; Yelena alone did not close her eyes but kept them fixed on Insarov's dark figure. Shubin was overcome with melancholy; the light wind blowing in his face irritated him; he hid his head in the collar of his greatcoat and for a while was little short of crying. Uvar Ivanovich snored happily, rocking in his seat. At last the two vehicles came to a stop. Two footmen carried Anna Vasilyevna out of the coach; she was completely spent, and as she said good-night to her companions she announced that she was half-dead; they began to thank her, but she merely repeated that she was half-dead. Yelena shook Insarov's hand—she had never done it before—and for a long time sat fully dressed at the window. Shubin seized an opportunity to whisper to Bersenev as he was leaving, "Well, isn't he a hero? Throwing drunken Germans into the water!"

"You didn't do even that much," replied Bersenev, and set out homewards with Insarov.

Day was breaking when the two friends reached their lodgings. The sun had not yet risen, but there already came a cool breath, a hoary dew lay on the grass, and the early skylarks sang high up in the half-dark abyss, from which a last large star looked down like a solitary eye.

XVI

Shortly after she had made Insarov's acquaintance, Yelena started a diary — for the fifth or sixth time. Here are some excerpts from it:

"*June*— Andrei Petrovich brings me books, but I cannot read them. I cannot bring myself to confess it to him, but neither do I want to give back the books and tell him I have read them. I think he would be disappointed. He notices everything I do. He seems to be greatly attached to me. A very nice man, is Andrei Petrovich.

"... What is it I want? Why is my heart so heavy, so anguished? Why do I look with envy at passing birds? I feel like flying away with them, I know not where, only it would have to be far, far from here. Is it not a sinful desire? I have my mother, my father, my family here. Do I not love them? No, I do not love them as I should like to. It is terrible to utter this, but it is true. Perhaps I am a great sinner, and perhaps that is why I am so sad and restless. A heavy hand seems to weigh upon me. It is as if I were in prison and the walls were about to tumble down upon me. But why do other people not feel that way? How can I love anybody since I am indifferent to my own kin? It seems that Father is right when he complains that I only love cats and dogs. I must think more about this. I do not pray

enough; I must pray more— Still, I think I could love well!

"... I still feel shy in Mr. Insarov's presence. I wonder why; after all, I am not so very young, and he is so unassuming and kind. Sometimes he looks very grave. He probably has other things to think about than us. I sense it, and I do not feel I have a right to take up his time. Andrei Petrovich is different. I could chat with him all day long. But he, too, keeps on talking about Insarov. The terrible details he gives me! Last night I saw him in a dream, with a dagger in his hand. He said to me, 'I will kill you, and myself, too.' What nonsense!

"... If only someone were to say to me, 'This is what you must do'! It is not enough to have a kind heart; to do good—yes, that is what matters in life. But how am I to do it? If only I could control myself! I cannot understand why I think of Mr. Insarov so often. When he comes and sits listening attentively, without ever trying to make the most of himself, I look at him and feel good, but that is all. When he has left I keep on thinking over what he said, and am angry with myself and even worried—I have no idea why. (His French is poor, but it does not disconcert him, and I like that.) However, I always think a great deal about new people. While talking with him I suddenly recalled our steward, Vasily, who rescued a crippled old man from a burning house, and nearly lost his own life. Father praised him, Mother gave him five rubles, but I could have bowed to him in homage. He had a plain, even foolish, face, and afterwards he took to drink.

"... Today I gave a copper to a beggar woman, and she asked me: 'Why are you so sad?' But I had never suspected that I looked sad. I think it comes from my being alone, always alone, with all the good and evil that are in me. There is no one to stretch out my hand

to. I do not want those who come to me, and the one I do want walks past.

"... I wonder what has come over me today: I feel dizzy, and am ready to drop on my knees and ask for quarter. I do not know who is doing it or how, but I feel as if I were being killed, and I cry out inwardly in my indignation, and weep, unable to control myself. Tame these passions in me, O Lord! Thou alone canst do it, for all else is powerless: neither my paltry alms, nor my occupations—nothing, nothing whatsoever—can help me. I would gladly hire myself out as a maid, for then I should feel much better.

"What good is my youth, why do I live, what good is my soul and everything else?

"... Insarov, Mr. Insarov—really, I do not know how to refer to him—continues to claim my thoughts. I wish I knew what goes on in his heart. He seems so open-minded, so easy to understand, and yet I cannot see anything. Sometimes he looks at me so searchingly—or is it just my imagination? Paul keeps on teasing me, and I am cross with him. What does he want? He is in love with me, but I want none of his love. He is also in love with Zoya. I am being unfair to him; yesterday he told me I did not know how to be unfair half-way. And he is right. It is bad.

"Ah, I am sure one needs some misfortune, poverty, or illness if one is not to get a swelled head.

"... Why did Andrei Petrovich have to tell me about those two Bulgarians today! He seemed to do it on purpose. What is Mr. Insarov to me? I am angry with Andrei Petrovich.

"... I take up my pen wondering how I shall begin. How unexpectedly he spoke to me in the garden today! How gentle and trusting he was! How quickly it all came about! As if we were very old friends who had only just recognized each other. How could it have taken me

so long to understand him! How close he is to me now! And the funny thing is that I am much calmer now. To think that I was cross with Andrei Petrovich and with him yesterday, and even called him *Mr. Insarov*, but today— Here at last is a truthful man, one I can rely upon. This one is no liar; he is the first man I have come across who does not lie, for everybody and everything else does. Andrei Petrovich, my dear, kind friend, why am I being so unfair to you? But no. Andrei Petrovich may be more learned, or even more intelligent, than he. But somehow he looks so small beside *him*. When *he* is speaking about his country, he grows and grows, and his face becomes more attractive, and his voice sounds like steel, and there seems to be no one on earth who could make him lower his eyes. He does not only talk, he has done things, and will do more. I shall ask him a lot of questions. How suddenly he turned to me and smiled at me! Nobody but a brother can do it like that. Oh, how glad I am! When he first came to see us, I could not imagine that we should become friends so soon. But now I am glad I remained indifferent at first. Indifferent? Am I not indifferent any more?

"...Not for a long time have I felt so calm inwardly. It is so quiet, so very quiet inside me. And there is nothing to record. I see him often, that is all. What else is there to record?

"... Paul is avoiding me; Andrei Petrovich comes less frequently—poor fellow! I think he is— But that is impossible. I like to talk with Andrei Petrovich—he never talks of himself, but always about something sensible and useful. He is not like Shubin. Shubin is as gorgeous as a butterfly, but he admires himself, something which butterflies never do. However, both Shubin and Andrei Petrovich—I know what I mean.

"... *He* likes to come here, I can see that. But why? What has he found in me? True, our tastes are similar:

neither of us likes poetry, and neither of us knows much about art. But he is so much better than I. He is calm, while I am for ever worrying; he has a path to follow, a goal to attain, but what about me, where am I going, where is my nest? He is calm, but all his thoughts are far off. Some day he will leave us for ever to go back home across the sea. Well, God help him. I shall be glad just the same to have known him while he was here.

"Why is he not a Russian? But no, he could not have been one.

"Mother likes him too: she says he is a modest man. Bless her soul, she does not understand him. Paul has stopped teasing me—he must have guessed that I resent his hints—but still he is jealous of him. Wicked boy! What right has he? Have I ever—?

"This is all nonsense. Why do these things come to my mind at all?

"... It is strange, however, that at twenty I have not loved anybody as yet. I think D.– I shall call him D., for I like the name Dimitry – is so serene because he has given himself up whole-heartedly to his cause, to his dream. Why should he fret? Whoever has given himself up to something heart and soul has nothing to worry about, nothing to account for. Nothing for the ego, everything for the cause. By the way, we both like the same flowers. I picked a rose today. A petal fell to the ground, and he picked it up. I gave him the whole rose.

"... D. comes often. Yesterday he spent all evening with us. He wants to teach me Bulgarian. With him I feel as I might with one of my own family. Even better!

"... The days fly fast. I am happy but somehow awe-struck, and I feel like thanking God, and could almost cry. Oh, days of warmth and sunshine!

"... I still feel good, but occasionally I am a little sad. I am happy. Am I happy?

"... I shall not forget yesterday's outing for a long time to come. What strange, new and terrible impressions! When he suddenly lifted up that giant and hurled him into the water like a ball, I was not frightened, but *he* frightened me. And then, what a sinister, almost cruel, face! The way he said the man would get out! I shuddered inwardly. It seems that I had not known him at all. And later, when everybody laughed, when I laughed myself, how pained I was on his account! He was ashamed —I sensed it—he was ashamed of me. He said so to me afterwards, when we were in the coach, when I tried to see him in the darkness and was afraid of him. He is obviously not to be trifled with, and he knows how to stand up for another. But why the anger, the twitching lips, the venom in the eyes? Or is it that it cannot be otherwise? That one cannot be a man, a fighter, and yet remain meek and gentle? Life is so coarse, he said to me recently. I repeated that to Andrei Petrovich, but he did not agree with D. Which of them is right? Yet how nicely that day had begun! How happy I was, walking beside him, even when we said nothing! Nevertheless, I am glad it happened. I suppose it had to be that way.

"... Anxiety again. I do not feel very well.

"... I have entered nothing in this diary for several days, because I was not in a writing mood. I felt that whatever I might write would be different from what was in my heart. And what is in my heart? I had a long talk with him, which opened my eyes to a great many things. He told me about his plans. By the way, now I know where he got the scar on his neck. My God, when I think that he was sentenced to death, that he had a narrow escape, that he was wounded! He is certain there will be war, and is glad it is coming. For all that I have never seen D. so sad. What could make him—him of all people! —sad? Father came back from town and found the two of us together, and the look he gave us was somehow

strange. When Andrei Petrovich came I saw that he had grown very thin and pallid. He reproached me with what he calls a cold and careless manner towards Shubin. And I had forgotten all about Paul. When I see him again I shall try to make up for my blunder. I have no time for him now—or for anyone else on earth. Andrei Petrovich talked with me as if he were sorry for me. What does it all mean? Why is everything so dark around me and inside me? I have an impression that something mysterious is happening around me and inside me, that I must find the right word—

"... I could not sleep last night, and I have a headache. Why write anything? He left so early today, and I wanted so much to talk with him. He seems to be avoiding me. Yes, he is avoiding me.

"... I have found the word -a light has dawned upon me! O God, have mercy upon me! I am in love!"

XVII

The day when Yelena recorded that last fatal word in her diary, Insarov was sitting in Bersenev's room, and Bersenev stood in front of him, a look of wonderment in his face. Insarov had just announced his intention of moving back to town on the morrow.

"But, my dear fellow," Bersenev exclaimed, "the best time is just beginning! Whatever are you going to do in Moscow? What's the idea of this sudden decision? Have you received some news or something?"

"I haven't received any news," replied Insarov. "But there are reasons why I cannot stay here any longer."

"You can't stay!"

"Andrei Petrovich," said Insarov, "pray do not insist, I beg you. I find it very hard to leave you, but it cannot be helped."

Bersenev looked at him closely.

"I know nothing can dissuade you," he said at last. "And so, your decision is final?"

"Absolutely final," answered Insarov; he got up and left.

Bersenev paced the room for a while, then took his hat and went to Stakhov's.

"You have something to tell me," said Yelena as soon as she found herself alone with him.

"Yes—how did you know?"

"Never mind how. Tell me what it is."

Bersenev told her of Insarov's decision.

Yelena went pale.

"What do you make of it?" she asked with an effort.

"You know Insarov doesn't like to account for his actions," said Bersenev. "Still, I think— Let us sit down, Yelena Nikolayevna, you don't look at all well. I think I can guess the reason for this sudden departure."

"What is it?" said Yelena as she unwittingly gripped Bersenev's hand with fingers grown suddenly cold.

"How shall I explain it?" Bersenev began, with a cheerless smile. "I shall have to go back to last spring, to the time when I got to know Insarov better. I met him at a relative's then. That relative had a daughter—a very pretty girl. I fancied Insarov was rather taken with her, and I told him so. He laughed and said I was mistaken because his heart was unscathed, but that he would have left immediately if anything of the sort had happened, because he did not want, he said, to betray his cause and his duty in order to gratify a personal sentiment. 'I'm a Bulgarian,' he said, 'and don't want Russian love.' "

"And now—do you think he—?" whispered Yelena, turning away, like one awaiting a blow, but keeping her grip on Bersenev's hand.

"I think," he said, lowering his voice in turn, "what I guessed wrongly then has now come true."

"In other words, you think—don't torture me!" Yelena burst out.

"I think," Berseney hastened to reply, "Insarov has fallen in love with a Russian girl and has made up his mind to keep his pledge and run away."

Yelena clutched his hand harder still and bowed her head as though to hide from a stranger's gaze the blush which had suddenly spread like a flame all over her face and neck.

"Andrei Petrovich, you are as kind as an angel," she said. "He will come to say good-bye, won't he?"

"Yes, I suppose he will, because he wouldn't want to leave without—"

"Tell him, please tell him—"

But the poor girl could not go on; tears gushed from her eyes, and she ran out.

"So that's how much she loves him," thought Berseney, walking slowly homewards. "I hadn't expected it; I didn't imagine it could be so strong already. She says I'm kind," he continued to reflect. "Who knows what feelings or motives made me tell Yelena all that? It certainly wasn't out of kindness. It was just my accursed desire to find out if the dagger was really stuck deep in the wound. I ought to be glad—they love each other, and I am the man who helped them. 'A future mediator between science and the Russian public' that's what Shubin calls me. Apparently I'm destined to be a go-between. But suppose I'm wrong? No, I'm not!"

Berseney's heart was heavy, and he could not concentrate on Raumer.

Next day Insarov called at Stakhov's some time after one o'clock. As luck would have it, Anna Vasilyevna had a visitor—the priest's wife, a neighbour of hers. She was an excellent, respectable woman, but she had had some little trouble with the police because it had occurred to her to bathe on a very hot day in a pond near

the road often used by the family of a high-placed general.

At first the presence of a stranger seemed a relief to Yelena, whose face had blanched as soon as she heard Insarov's footfall; but her heart almost stood still when she thought that he might say good-bye without talking to her in private. He looked embarrassed and avoided her gaze. "He can't start saying good-bye in a moment, can he?" she thought. As though to confirm her fears, Insarov turned to Anna Vasilyevna; Yelena rose hurriedly and called him aside, to the window. Surprised, the priest's wife tried to turn round, but she was so tightly laced that every movement made her corset creak, and she gave up the attempt.

"I know why you are here," said Yelena hastily. "Andrei Petrovich told me about your intention, but I beg you—I implore you not to take leave of us today, but to come again tomorrow morning, around eleven. I must have a word with you."

Insarov bowed.

"I shan't keep you any longer. You promise?"

Insarov bowed again, but said nothing.

"Come here, Lena," Anna Vasilyevna called. "See what a nice handbag."

"I embroidered it with my own hands," remarked the priest's wife.

Yelena came away from the window.

Insarov left a quarter of an hour later. While he was there Yelena watched him stealthily. He felt ill at ease and kept on averting his eyes, and he left in a strange manner—as suddenly as though he had vanished into thin air.

The day wore sluggishly on; the long, long night dragged on even more sluggishly. Yelena would sit on her bed, clasping her knees with her hands and resting her head on them, or walk over to the window and put

her heated forehead to the cool pane, thinking, thinking, thinking the same thoughts till she was utterly exhausted. Her heart might as well have stopped beating or disappeared from her breast, but the veins throbbed painfully in her head, her hair seared her skin, and her lips were parched. "He will come—he didn't say good-bye to Mother—he couldn't deceive me. Can it be true what Andrei Petrovich said? No, that's impossible. He didn't *say* he would come. Can it be that I've parted with him for ever?" Such were the thoughts that beset her—they did not come and go but billowed in her mind like fog. "He loves me!" it would flash upon her whole being, and she would stare into the darkness; a smile that no one could see would part her lips; but at once she would toss her head and clasp her fingers on the back of her head, and the thoughts which had been there before would billow in her mind again. Just before dawn she undressed and got into bed, but she could not sleep. The first fiery shafts of the sun shot into her room. "Oh, if he loves me!" she exclaimed suddenly, and, unabashed by the light pouring over her, she opened her arms.

She got up, dressed, and went downstairs. No one was up yet. She went into the garden, and it was so still and green and fresh there, the birds chirped so intimately, the flowers looked so joyful, that she was awestruck. "If it is true," she thought, "then no blade of grass can be happier than I am! But is it true?" She went back to her room and set about changing to kill time. But everything slipped from her hands, and she still sat half-dressed in front of her little toilet mirror when she was called to tea. She went downstairs. Her mother noticed her pallor, but all that she said was, "You look quite nice this morning." Then she looked her over and added, "That dress becomes you very well. You must always put it on when you wish to please somebody." Yelena sat down in a corner without a word. The clock struck nine; two more hours to wait

till eleven. She picked up a book, then turned to her needlework, then went back to the book; then she decided to walk up and down one of the paths a hundred times, and did so; then she looked on for a long time as Anna Vasilyevna played patience, but when she glanced at the clock it was not yet ten. Shubin came into the drawing-room. She tried to talk with him and offered him her apologies, not knowing what for. Every word she uttered made her puzzle somehow. Shubin bent down to her. She expected mockery, but, looking up, she saw a sad and friendly face before her. She smiled at the face. Shubin smiled back, and went softly out. She wanted to stop him, but could not think at once of how to call him back. Finally it struck eleven. She waited and waited and waited, listening. She could no longer do anything, and even stopped thinking. Her heart came to life and beat louder and louder, and, strangely enough, time seemed to fly faster. A quarter of an hour passed, then half an hour, then a few more minutes, or so she imagined, and suddenly she started as she heard the clock strike one, not twelve. "He isn't coming, he's going to leave without saying good-bye!" The blood rushed to her head even as the idea occurred to her. She felt her breath catch and tears well up in her eyes. She ran to her room and fell on her bed, her face on her clasped hands.

She lay motionless for half an hour, tears wetting the pillow through her fingers. Suddenly she sat up; something strange was going on inside her—the look in her face changed, her moist eyes dried up of themselves and glistened, her eyebrows knitted together, her lips pressed tight. Another half-hour elapsed. Yelena strained her ear for the last time, listening for the familiar voice. Then she got up, put on her bonnet and gloves, draped her lace shawl round her shoulders and, slipping out of the house unseen, hurried off down the road leading to Bersenev's.

XVIII

Yelena walked along with bowed head, her eyes on the road. She was afraid of nothing, and had no idea of what she was doing; she wanted to see Insarov again, that was all. She was not aware that the sun had long since disappeared, shut off by heavy black clouds, that a gusty wind soughed in the trees and tugged at her dress, that the dust kept on rising and racing down the road in a whirling pillar. The rain began to fall in large drops, but she paid no heed to it; it rained harder, the lightning flashed, and it thundered. Yelena stopped to look round. Luckily for her, not far from where the rainstorm had overtaken her, there was an abandoned, tumbledown chapel over a well. She ran to it and took shelter under the low roof. The rain poured down in torrents; the sky was completely overcast. In mute despair Yelena looked at the thick veil of pelting raindrops. The last hope of seeing Insarov was dwindling. An old beggar woman joined her under the shelter; she brushed off the rain and said with a bow, "Hiding from the rain, my dove." She then sat on the step, sighing and groaning. Yelena dropped her hand into her pocket; the old woman saw the gesture, and her face, which must have been handsome but now was wrinkled and sallow, brightened up. "Thank you so much, my angel," she said. Yelena did not find her purse, but the old woman was already holding out her hand.

"I have no money with me, Granny," said Yelena, "but you may take this—perhaps you can use it."

She handed over her handkerchief.

"Oh, but what am I to do with your hanky, my sweet?" said the beggar. "I could give it to my granddaughter at her wedding, I suppose. May the Lord reward you for your kindness!"

There was a thunderclap.

"Jesus Christ!" murmured the old woman, and crossed

herself thrice. "You know, I think I've seen you before," she added after a little while. "I think you gave me Christ's alms before."

Yelena looked closely at the old woman and recognized her.

"Yes, Granny," she replied. "You asked me then why I was so sad."

"Yes, my dove, so I did. That's how I knew you again. But you look as if you were in grief even now. Your hanky here is all wet—have you been crying? You young girls are all alike, with your sorrows and great woes."

"What sorrows, Granny?"

"What sorrows? Really, now, my good girl, you shouldn't try being smart with an old woman like me! I know what's eating you, and it isn't because you've lost your parents. Once I was young myself, my love, and I went through it all. Oh, yes. And I'll tell you this because you've been so good to me: you've met a good man who isn't flighty and can be trusted, and you must hold on to him—hold on harder than death. If it is to be, it will be, and if not, then the Lord's will be done. That's how it is. Why are you staring at me? Didn't you know I could tell fortunes? If you like I'll take away all your sorrow with your hanky. I'll just take it away, and that's all there is to it. Look—the rain is slackening; you wait till it stops, but I must be going. It won't be the first time I've been wet through. So remember, my dove: you were grieving, but now your grief's gone and done with. Amen!"

The old woman rose from the step and shuffled away. Yelena looked after her in amazement. "What can it all mean?" she whispered to herself.

The rain was abating, and the sun glimpsed playfully for a moment. Yelena was about to leave her refuge when suddenly she saw Insarov a dozen paces away. Wrapped in a raincoat, he was coming down the same path which she had taken; he seemed to be hurrying home.

She leant her hand on the worn railing of the little porch, and tried to call him, but her voice failed. Insarov was already passing her without raising his eyes.

"Dmitry Nikanorevich!" she brought out at last.

Insarov stopped short and looked back. At first he did not recognize Yelena, but the next moment he walked up to her.

"You here?" he exclaimed.

Silently she stepped back into the chapel. Insarov followed her.

"You here?" he repeated.

Again she said nothing, but just looked at him with a long, tender gaze. He lowered his eyes.

"Were you coming back from our house?" she asked.

"No—I was coming from somewhere else."

"No?" echoed Yelena, trying to smile. "So that's how you keep your word! I have been waiting for you since morning."

"You will remember, Yelena Nikolayevna, that I didn't promise anything yesterday."

Yelena smiled feebly again, and ran her hand over her face. Both her face and her hands were very pale.

"In other words, you were going to leave without saying good-bye to us?"

"Yes," Insarov muttered, in a grim, toneless voice.

"What! After we had known each other for so long, after all the things we had discussed, after all that— In other words, if I hadn't met you here by chance"—Yelena's voice quivered, and she paused for a second—"you would have left without shaking hands with me for the last time, and without regretting it?"

Insarov turned away.

"Please don't talk like that, Yelena Nikolayevna. I'm miserable enough as it is. Believe me, my decision cost me a tremendous effort. If you knew—"

"I don't want to know why you are leaving," Yelena interrupted in alarm. "I suppose you have to. Apparently we *must* part. You couldn't have brought yourself to vex your friends without good reason. But do friends part like that? You and I are friends, aren't we?"

"No," said Insarov.

"What!" murmured Yelena. Her cheeks flushed a little.

"It is because we aren't friends that I'm leaving. Don't make me say what I do not want to say—what I will not say."

"You used to be frank with me," said Yelena, a trifle reproachfully. "Do you remember?"

"That was when I could be frank, because I had nothing to conceal. But now—"

"Now what?" asked Yelena.

"Now— Now I must go. Good-bye!"

At that moment, had Insarov raised his eyes, he would have seen Yelena's face brightening more and more, even as his own clouded and darkened; but he was staring doggedly at the floor.

"Well, good-bye then, Dmitry Nikanorovich," she said. "Give me your hand at least, since we've met anyway."

Insarov was about to hold out his hand.

"No, I cannot," he murmured, and turned away again.

"You cannot?"

"No. Good-bye."

He started towards the door.

"Wait one more moment," said Yelena. "You seem to be afraid of me. But I have more courage than you," she added, a light tremour running through her body. "I can tell you—do you want me to?—why you found me here. Do you know where I was going?"

Insarov looked at Yelena, astounded.

"I was coming to you."

"To me?"

Yelena hid her face in her hands.

"You wanted to make me say I loved you," she whispered. "Now I have—said it."

"Yelena!" cried Insarov.

She took her hands away from her face, looked at him, and flung herself on his breast.

He held her close to his heart, saying nothing. There was no need for him to tell her that he loved her. His exclamation alone, that instant transformation of the man, the manner in which his breast heaved as she clung to it trustingly, the manner in which his finger-tips brushed her hair—suggested to Yelena that she was loved. He did not say anything, nor did she need any words. "He is here, he loves me—what else do I want?" The calm of bliss, of a peaceful harbour, of a goal attained, that heavenly calm which imparts both meaning and beauty to death itself, swept over her in a divine wave. She desired nothing because she possessed everything. "O my brother, my friend, my darling!" whispered her lips, and she wondered whether it was his heart or hers beating and melting so sweetly in her breast.

He stood motionless, his strong arms clasped around the young being that had given herself up to him, and felt pressed against his breast a new and infinitely dear burden. Tenderness and ineffable gratitude broke down his determination, and tears he had never before known started to his eyes.

But she did not cry; she merely said again and again, "O my friend! O my brother!"

"So you are willing to go anywhere with me?" he said to her, a quarter of an hour later, still holding her in his arms.

"Anywhere, to the world's end. I shall always want to be where you are."

"Are you sure you are not deceiving yourself? You know that your parents will never consent to our marriage."

"I'm not deceiving myself. I know."

"You know that I'm poor, almost a beggar?"

"Yes."

"That I'm not a Russian, that I'm not destined to live in Russia, that you will have to sever all ties with your country and kin?"

"I know."

"Do you also know that I've devoted myself to an arduous and thankless cause, that I—that we shall have to face danger and, moreover, hardships and perhaps humiliation?"

"I know, I know it all. I love you."

"That you will have to give up all your habits, that over there, alone among strangers, you may be compelled to work?"

She put her hands on his lips.

"I love you, dear."

He began passionately to kiss her slender, rosy hand. Yelena did not withdraw it, and with a sort of childish joy, with laughing curiosity watched him covering her palm and fingers with kisses.

Suddenly she blushed and hid her face on his breast.

With tender hands he lifted her head and gazed into her eyes.

"So hail then, my wife in the eyes of God and man!" he said.

XIX

An hour later Yelena stepped softly into the drawing-room, her bonnet in one hand and her shawl in the other. Her hair was slightly dishevelled, a small pink spot could be seen on each cheek, a smile lingered on her lips, and even her half-shut eyes were smiling. She was so tired she could hardly walk, but she was enjoying that fatigue

—indeed, she was enjoying everything. Everything seemed so nice and friendly. Uvar Ivanovich was sitting at the window; she went up to him, put her hand on his shoulder, stretched a little, and chuckled.

"What is it?" he asked in surprise.

She did not know what to say. She could have given him a kiss.

" 'Down he went,' " she said finally.

But Uvar Ivanovich did not move a muscle as he continued to stare at Yelena in astonishment. She dropped both her shawl and her bonnet upon him.

"Uvar Ivanovich, darling," she said, "I'm tired and sleepy." She chuckled again, and dropped into the easy chair next to him.

"Ahem," Uvar Ivanovich mumbled, twiddling his fingers. "A nap—yes, not bad—"

Yelena looked round, thinking, "I shall soon have to part with all this, but the queer thing is that I feel no fear, doubt, or regret. Oh, yes, I'll be sorry for Mother." Then she saw the little chapel again, and heard his voice, and felt his arms about her. Her heart beat joyfully but faintly, for it, too, was languid with joy. She recalled the old beggar woman. "She did take away my grief," she mused. "How happy I am! And how little I deserve it! How soon it came!" She had only to give way to her emotion a little to release an endless flow of sweet tears, which she held back by chuckling. Whatever pose she adopted she thought it could not possibly be any better or more comfortable, for it was like being lulled to sleep. Her every movement was slow and soft; her usual impetuosity and awkwardness were gone. Zoya came in, and Yelena thought that she had never seen a face lovelier than hers; then Anna Vasilyevna came in, and Yelena felt a pang, but how tenderly she embraced her good mother and kissed her on the forehead, near the greying hair! Then she went to her own room, and everything

there fairly beamed at her. With what feelings of bashful exultation and submission she sat down on her bed, the selfsame bed on which, three hours earlier, she had spent such bitter moments! "Of course I knew even then that he loved me," she thought, "and before that, too. But no! no! It's a sin to think so." " 'You are my wife,' " she whispered, covering her face with her hands, and sank to her knees.

As evening drew near she grew pensive. It made her sad to think that it would be long before she saw Insarov again. He could not stay with Bersenev without arousing suspicion, and he and Yelena had therefore agreed that he would have to go back to Moscow, but would call once or twice before the end of the summer; she, for her part, had promised to write to him and, if possible, arrange for them to meet somewhere near Kountsovo. She went down into the drawing-room for tea and there found all her family and Shubin, who looked at her shrewdly the moment she appeared; she would have liked to begin a friendly talk with him as in the old days, but she feared his perspicacity and was not sure of herself. She had a notion it was not mere chance that he had left her alone for a whole fortnight. Soon Bersenev came and conveyed to Anna Vasilyevna Insarov's regards and apologies for having left for Moscow without paying her his respects. It was the first time during that day that Insarov's name had been mentioned in Yelena's presence; she felt herself blushing; she realized that she ought to express regret for the sudden departure of so agreeable a friend, but she could not pretend, and she sat there, silent and motionless, while Anna Vasilyevna gave vent to lamentations. Yelena tried to keep near Bersenev, of whom she was not afraid, even though he knew part of her secret; with him she sought refuge from Shubin, who looked at her again and again, searchingly if not quizzically. Bersenev, too, was puzzled more than once during the evening, for

he had expected to find Yelena in a more melancholy mood. Luckily for her, he and Shubin started an argument on art; she moved away, and listened to their voices as in a dream. Gradually not only they but also the room and all about her became part of a dream—the samovar on the table, Uvar Ivanovich's short waistcoat, Zoya's polished finger-nails, Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich's portrait in oils on the wall; it all faded away in a haze and ceased to exist. But she was sorry for all of them. "What do they live for?" she asked herself.

"Are you sleepy, Lena?" asked her mother.

She did not hear the question.

"A half-justified hint, did you say?" These words of Shubin's, uttered in sharp accents, suddenly roused Yelena from her reverie. "But that's just what gives it flavour!" he went on. "A justified hint causes despondency, which is unchristian, an unjustified one leaves you indifferent, which is silly, and a half-justified one both annoys you and overtaxes your patience. If I were to say, for example, that Yelena Nikolayevna was in love with one of us, what sort of a hint would that be, eh?"

"Ah, M. Paul," said Yelena, "i should like to show you how annoyed I am, but, really, I cannot. I'm completely exhausted."

"Then why don't you go to bed?" asked Anna Vasilyevna, who usually dozed in the evening and was therefore only too willing to send others to bed. "Say good night to me and go—Andrei Petrovich will excuse you."

Yelena kissed her mother, made a general bow, and went. Shubin saw her to the door.

"Yelena Nikolayevna," he whispered to her on the threshold, "you trample M. Paul underfoot, you tread cruelly upon him, and yet M. Paul worships you, and your little feet, and the shoes on your little feet, and the soles of your shoes."

Yelena shrugged a shoulder and reluctantly held out

her hand—not the one which Insarov had kissed. Back in her own room, she at once undressed, got into bed, and fell asleep. It was a sound and serene sleep that was like a child's or rather like the sleep of a convalescent child whose mother sits by its cradle, gazing at it and listening to its breathing.

XX

"Look into my room for a moment," said Shubin to Bersenev as soon as his friend had said good night to Anna Vasilyevna. "I've got something to show you."

Bersenev went to the wing in which Shubin lived. He was struck by the multitude of studies, figurines, and busts wrapped in damp rags and taking up every nook and corner.

"You must have been working in good earnest," he remarked to Shubin.

"I have to be doing *something*," replied the other. "When one thing doesn't come off you must try something else. However, I'm like a Corsican—I'm more concerned with the vendetta than pure art. *Trema, Bisanzio!*"*

"I don't understand," said Bersenev.

"You just wait. Here, my dear friend and benefactor, kindly take a look at my revenge Number One."

Shubin unwrapped one of the figurines, and Bersenev saw a beautifully executed bust of Insarov, a perfect likeness. Shubin had faithfully reproduced the lines of his face down to the minutest detail, giving them a wonderfully attractive expression—honest, noble, and manly.

Bersenev was delighted.

"I say, this is simply admirable!" he cried. "Congratulations! It's fit to be exhibited. Why do you call this magnificent work of art revenge?"

* Tremble, Byzantium! (Ital.)—*Tr.*

"Because I'm going to make a present of what you were kind enough to call a magnificent work of art, sir. I will give it to Yelena Nikolayevna on her birthday. Do you understand the parable? I'm not blind, I can see what goes on about me, but I'm a gentleman, sir, and I take my revenge in a gentlemanly fashion.

"As to this," he added, unwrapping another figurine, "since modern aesthetics concedes to the artist the enviable right to perpetuate all sorts of nasty things, exalting them to the rank of gems of creation, I have, in exalting this particular gem, which is Number Two, taken my revenge, not at all like a gentleman, but simply *en canaille.*"

Deftly he pulled off the canvas, and Bersenev was confronted with another statuette of Insarov, done in the style of Dantin. Nothing more ingenious or more biting could have been conceived. The young Bulgarian was represented as a ram standing on its hind legs, its head lowered to butt. The "spouse of fine-fleeced ewes" had a face stamped with stupid gravity, defiance, obstinacy, awkwardness, and fatuity, yet the similarity was so striking, so obvious, that Bersenev burst out laughing.

"Amusing, isn't it?" said Shubin. "You recognize the hero? Would you suggest exhibiting this one, too? I'm going to present it to myself on my own birthday! May I cut a caper, Your Excellency?"

Shubin jumped up two or three times, kicking himself from behind as he did so.

Bersenev picked up the canvas and threw it over the statuette.

"My, how magnanimous you are!" said Shubin. "Let me see, whom does history consider particularly magnanimous? Oh, never mind! And now," he went on, gravely and sadly, as he unwrapped a third, fairly large block of clay, "you will see something that will convince you of the humility and perspicacity of your friend. You will

satisfy yourself that he realizes—again as a genuine artist—how essential and useful it is to stigmatize himself. Behold!"

The canvas shot up, revealing to Bersenev two heads placed so close to each other as though they had grown together. He could not make out at once what it was, but, looking more closely, he saw that one head was Annushka's and the other, Shubin's own, although they were caricatures rather than portraits. Annushka was represented as a plump wench with a low forehead, bloated eyes, and a cheeky snub nose. Her thick lips were smiling saucily; the expression on her devil-may-care face was sensuous and bold, with a touch of good-nature. His own self Shubin had portrayed as a wasted and haggard roué, with hollow cheeks, strands of thin hair hanging limply down, a vacant look in the lustreless eyes, and the pointed nose of a corpse.

Bersenev turned away in disgust.

"Well, how do you like the couple?" said Shubin. "Won't you kindly think of an appropriate inscription? I've already thought of inscriptions for the first two. The inscription under the bust will read 'A Hero Bent on Saving His Country," and the one under the statuette, 'Look Out, Tyrants!' Now, under this one it might say, 'The Future of the Artist Pavel Shubin.' How would that be?"

"Stop it," replied Bersenev. "How can you waste your time on this kind of—?" He could not think of an appropriate word at once.

"Did you mean to say 'filth'? Well, let me tell you, old man, that if I've done anything worth exhibiting, it's this couple."

" 'Filth' is right," Bersenev agreed. "And then, what's all this nonsense? You don't seem to have a propensity for this sort of evolution, unlike our artists who are unfortunately only too prone to it. You're simply casting a slur on yourself."

"You think so?" said Shubin gloomily. "If I have no propensity and if I ever acquire it, the one to blame will be—a certain person. Do you know," he added, with a tragic frown, "that I've already tried drinking?"

"Oh, no!"

"Upon my soul, I have," replied Shubin, and suddenly grinned, his face brightening. "Only I don't like the stuff; I find it hard to swallow it, and afterwards my head feels like a drum. The great Lushchikhin himself—I mean Kharlampy Lushchikhin, Moscow's, and some people say Russia's, topmost guzzler—has declared that I'm no good. He says the bottle doesn't appeal to me."

Bersenev swung up his fist to crush the couple, but Shubin stopped him.

"Come, old man, don't do that. It may serve as a warning, as a bugbear."

Bersenev laughed.

"All right, I'll spare your bugbear for you," he said, "and long live eternal, pure art!"

"Long live!" Shubin cried in his turn. "With art what's good seems better, and what's bad can't do any harm."

The two friends exchanged a hearty handshake and parted.

XXI

Yelena's first sensation on awakening was one of joyful fright. "Is it possible? Is it really possible?" she asked herself, so happy that her heart almost stopped beating. Recollections swept over and swallowed her. Then a blissful, ecstatic calm descended upon her again. But anxiety gradually took hold of her during the morning, and the following days she felt listless and lonely. True, she now knew what she wanted, but that did not make things any easier for her. That unforgettable meeting had thrown

her out of the old rut for good; and while she was no longer in the rut but far away from it, everything else went on as usual, in the customary order, as though nothing had changed; the former life continued, with Yelena's participation and help expected. She attempted a letter to Insarov, but failed; the words she put to paper were flat, or perhaps false. Her diary she had given up, drawing a thick line under the last sentence. That belonged to the past, while all her thoughts, her whole being, turned to the future. She was dejected. She imagined there was something criminal in her sitting beside her mother, who did not suspect anything, listening to her, answering her questions, talking with her; she sensed the presence of something spurious in herself; she was indignant, although she had done nothing to make her blush; more than once she was gripped with an almost irresistible desire to tell her mother everything, to make a clean breast of it, come what may. "Why didn't Dmitry take me away at once, right from that chapel, to wherever he wanted to take me?" she thought. "Didn't he tell me I was his wife in the eyes of God? Why am I here?" She began to shun everyone, even Uvar Ivanovich, who was extremely puzzled, and twiddled his fingers more than ever. The things about her no longer appeared friendly or pleasant, or even dreamlike, but weighed her down like a nightmare—an immovable, dead burden; they seemed to reproach her, to resent her, to refuse to have anything to do with her. "You still belong to us," they seemed to say. Even her poor nurselings, the oppressed birds and beasts, looked upon her—or so she fancied—with a distrustful and hostile eye. She was ashamed of her feelings. "After all, this is my home," she told herself, "my family, my country!" "No, it is no longer your country, nor your family," another voice insisted. She was overcome with fear and vexed by her own timidity. Her troubles were only beginning, but already she was

losing her patience. Surely that was not what she had promised.

It took her some time to pull herself together. But a week wore on, then another, and Yelena regained some of her calm and got accustomed to her new position. She wrote two little notes to Insarov and took them to the post office herself, for she would never have trusted the maid with them, both from bashfulness and from pride. She expected him to call soon, but one morning Stakhov arrived instead.

XXII

No one in the house of retired Guards Lieutenant Stakhov had ever seen him so sour and yet so full of assurance and self-importance as that day. With slow, noisy step he strode into the drawing-room in overcoat and hat; he drew near the mirror and studied his reflection with a calmly stern air, shaking his head and biting his lip. As usual, Anna Vasilyevna met him with outward agitation and secret joy. He did not bother to remove his hat or to greet her, and silently allowed Yelena to kiss his suède glove. Anna Vasilyevna asked him questions about the waters he had been taking, but got no reply. Uvar Ivanovich came in; Stakhov glanced at him and said, "Hullo!" His manner with Uvar Ivanovich was generally cold and overbearing, even though he admitted that there were "vestiges of genuine Stakhov blood in him." It is well known that nearly all of Russia's aristocratic families believe they have exclusive pedigree characteristics; we have more than once chanced to hear "private" talk about "Podsalaskin" noses and "Perepreyev" napes. Zoya stepped in and curtsied to Stakhov. He cleared his throat and dropped into an easy chair; then, after ordering some coffee, he at last took off his hat. The coffee was brought; he drank a cupful, surveyed everyone in turn,

and muttered, "*Sortez, s'il vous plaît*"; then, turning to his wife, he added, "*Et vous, madame, restez, je vous prie.*"

Everyone left but Anna Vasilyevna. Her head trembled with agitation. She was struck by Stakhov's solemn manner, and was looking forward to something out of the ordinary.

"What is it?" she exclaimed as soon as the door was closed.

Stakhov threw an indifferent glance at her.

"Nothing special—why must you always put on the air of a victim?" he began, drooping the corners of his mouth at every word. "I simply wanted to warn you that today we shall have a new guest to dinner."

"Who is he?"

"Yegor Andreyevich Kurnatovsky. You don't know him. He's chief secretary in the Senate."

"He is coming to dinner?"

"Yes."

"Did you order everybody out of the room just to tell me that?"

This time the glance which Stakhov threw at her was ironical.

"Are you surprised? I have a greater surprise coming."

He paused. For a while Anna Vasilyevna did not say anything, either.

"I should like—" she said then.

"I know you've always considered me immoral," he began all of a sudden.

"I!" she murmured, aghast.

"You may be right, too. I will not deny that sometimes you had good reason to be dissatisfied"—"The greys!" it flashed across Anna Vasilyevna's mind—"though you must admit that, your constitution being what you know it to be—"

"But I don't blame you at all, Nikolai Artemyevich!"

"*C'est possible.* At any rate I don't propose to justify myself. Time will do it for me. Nevertheless, I consider it my duty to assure you that I know my obligations and am capable of promoting the interests of—of the family entrusted to my care."

"What's on his mind?" thought Anna Vasilyevna. (She had no way of knowing that the day before a debate had started, in a corner of the sofa room of the English Club, on Russian inability to make speeches. "Which of us can speak? Name one if you can!" one of the arguers had exclaimed. "What is wrong with Stakhov?" another had answered, pointing at Stakhov, who had all but squeaked with pleasure.)

"Take my daughter Yelena," Stakhov went on. "Don't you think it is high time she set a firm foot on the path of—married, I mean? There's no harm in all the philosophizing and philanthropy up to a certain limit, to a certain age. But it is high time she emerged from the haze she lives in, withdrew from the company of all these artists, students, and Montenegrins, and became like everybody else."

"How am I to take that?" asked Anna Vasilyevna.

"Kindly let me finish," replied Stakhov, drooping the corners of his lips as before. "I wish to tell you without beating about the bush that I have made the acquaintance of—I'm on friendly terms with a young man, Mr. Kurnatovsky, whom I hope to make my son-in-law. I take the liberty of assuming that when you have seen him you will not accuse me of partiality or rash judgement." As he spoke Stakhov admired his own eloquence. "An excellent education—he is a lawyer—very good manners, thirty-three years old, chief secretary, collegiate councillor, decorated with the Order of St. Stanislas. I trust you will give me my due by admitting that I am not one of those *pères de comédie* who rave about distinctions. You have told me, however, that Yelena Nikolayevna likes men with

a positive, business-like strain, and Yegor Andreyevich is an outstanding man of action in his own field. On the other hand, my daughter has a weakness for generous deeds. And let me tell you that as soon as Yegor Andreyevich was in a position—you understand me, don't you?—in a position to live comfortably on his salary, he at once renounced in favour of his brothers the yearly allowance granted by his father."

"What is his father?" asked Anna Vasilyevna.

"His father? His father, too, is well known in his own way, a man of impeccable moral qualities, *un vrai stoïcien*, a retired major, I believe. He is the manager of all of Count B.'s estates."

"Oh!" said Anna Vasilyevna.

"Oh? What do you mean—oh?" Stakhov retorted. "Is it possible that you, too, are prejudiced?"

"But I didn't say anything," Anna Vasilyevna expostulated.

"Yes, you did—you said *oh*! Anyhow, I decided to let you know my intentions in advance, and I presume—I hope Mr. Kurnatovsky will be received *à bras ouverts*. He is not one of those Montenegrins, you know."

"Certainly. Only, we shall have to tell Vanka the cook to add an extra dish."

"You will appreciate that I cannot go into *that*," said Stakhov. He rose, put on his hat and, whistling airily—he heard someone say that one may whistle either in one's own *dacha* or in the riding-school—went out into the garden for a walk. From the window of his room in the wing, Shubin looked at him and stuck out his tongue.

At ten minutes to four, a coach drew up at the Stakhov house, and a presentable young man, dressed with simple good taste, alighted from it and asked to be announced. He was Yegor Andreyevich Kurnatovsky.

Here is in part what Yelena wrote to Insarov next day:

"You may congratulate me, dear Dmitry, on the ac-

quisition of a fiancé. He had dinner with us yesterday. Father met him at the English Club, I think. Of course, it was not as a fiancé that he came yesterday. But my good mother, to whom Father had confided his hopes, let me into the secret. His name is Yegor Andreyevich Kurnatovsky. He is chief secretary in the Senate. I shall first describe his looks. He is rather short of stature—shorter than you—and well-built; he has well-proportioned features, close-cropped hair, and large side-whiskers. His eyes are small (like yours), brown, and quick; his lips are large and flat; there is a permanent smile in his eyes and on his lips, which somehow seems perfunctory, as if it were on duty. His manner is very simple, he speaks distinctly, and everything else about him is distinct: he walks and laughs and eats as if he were working. 'How well she has studied him!' you may say to yourself. Yes, I have, so as to be able to describe him to you. And then, one has to know one's fiancé. There is something iron-like in him—something dull and shallow—and honest; they say he *is* very honest. You are like iron, too, but that is different. At dinner he sat beside me, and Shubin sat opposite us. First the conversation turned on commercial enterprises of some sort; I understand he knows a great deal about them and almost gave up the Civil Service to take over a large factory. I wonder why he did not. Then Shubin brought up the theatre. Mr. Kurnatovsky announced—without any false modesty, I admit—that to him art was a closed book. That reminded me of you, but I said to myself, 'Dmitry and I are ignorant of art in a different way.' This man seemed to say: 'I know nothing about art, nor is there any need for it, but in a well-organized state it is tolerated.' However, he does not seem to think much of Petersburg or *comme il faut*; once he even called himself a proletarian. 'We are nothing more than workmen!' he said. I thought: 'If Dmitry had said that, I should have disliked it, but I don't care what

this man says or how much he brags!' He was very courteous to me; still I felt all along as if I were being addressed by a very, very indulgent superior. When he wants to praise someone he says so-and-so 'has rules'—a favourite phrase of his. He must be self-confident, industrious, and capable of self-sacrifice (I am being impartial, as you see), that is, of sacrificing his own interests, but he is a great tyrant. It would be very bad indeed to fall into his hands. There was talk at dinner about bribes.

" 'I realize,' he said, 'that in many instances he who accepts a bribe is not to blame, because he could not have done otherwise. Nevertheless, if caught, he should be crushed.'

"I gave a cry.

" 'Crushed—an innocent man!'

" 'Yes, out of principle.'

" 'What principle?' asked Shubin.

"Kurnatovsky was either perplexed or astonished, and he said, 'No need to explain that.'

"Father, who stands in awe of him, I believe, agreed with him, saying that there certainly was no need, and the subject was dropped, much to my displeasure. In the evening Bersenev came and started a terrific argument with him. Never before had I seen our good Andrei Petrovich so excited. Mr. Kurnatovsky by no means denied that science, universities, etc., were useful, and yet I knew why Andrei Petrovich was so indignant. The other looks upon it as a sort of gymnastics. Shubin came up to me after dinner and said: 'This man and another one (he cannot bear to utter your name) are both men of action, but see how different they are: with that one, it's a genuine, living ideal provided by life itself, while with this one it isn't even a sense of duty, it's just the honesty of an official, and efficiency without content.' Shubin is clever, and I have remembered for you what he said; but I do not really think there is any similarity between you.

You *believe* while he does not, because one *should not believe* in oneself alone.

"It was late when he left, but Mother contrived to tell me that he had taken a fancy to me and that Father was delighted. I wonder if he said about me, too, that I had rules. I almost said to Mother that I was sorry but I already had a husband. Why is it that Father dislikes you so? Mother could be won over somehow or other.

"My dear one, I have described that gentleman so very minutely just to overcome my melancholy. There is no life for me without you, and I keep seeing and hearing you. I am waiting for you, not in this house, as you suggested—imagine how difficult and painful it would be for us! -but in that place I wrote you about—that grove. Oh, my darling! I love you so!"

XXIII

Some three weeks after Kurnatovsky's first visit, Anna Vasilyevna, to Yelena's great joy, moved back to Moscow, into her big wooden house near Prechistenka Street, a house with columns, white lyres, and a wreath over each window, an attic, outhouses, a flower-garden, a huge courtyard planted with trees, a well in the yard, and a dog's kennel by the well. Anna Vasilyevna had never returned to town so early, but that year the first autumn cold brought on her gunboils; Stakhov, too, missed his wife now that his course of treatment was finished, the more so as Augustina Christianovna had gone to Reval to see her cousin; a family of foreigners had arrived in Moscow and was demonstrating "plastic poses"—*des poses plastiques*—whose description in *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* had strongly aroused Anna Vasilyevna's curiosity. In short, a further stay in the country proved inconvenient and even incompatible with the execution of what

Stakhov called his "projects." The last fortnight seemed very long to Yelena. Kurnatovsky called twice on Sundays, being busy on the other days. Although he came to see Yelena, he talked mainly with Zoya, who was very much taken with him. "*Das ist ein Mann,*" she thought as she looked at his dusky, manful face and listened to his self-confident, condescending talk. She was sure no one had so wonderful a voice or could enunciate "I have had the honour," or "I am quite satisfied" so perfectly. Insarov did not call at Stakhov's, but once Yelena met him by stealth in a small grove overlooking the river. They had scarcely time enough to exchange a few words. Shubin returned to Moscow with Anna Vasilyevna, and Bersenev followed them a few days later.

Insarov sat in his room, reading for the third time letters brought from Bulgaria by a chance messenger, since it was considered unsafe to use the post. The letters alarmed him. Events in the East had taken a rapid course; the occupation of the Danube principalities by Russian troops caused general concern; a storm was gathering, a war seemed imminent. Conflagrations were breaking out everywhere, and no one could foresee which way the fire might turn, nor where it would stop; old grievances were out again, and so were old hopes. Insarov's heart beat with added vigour: *his* hopes were coming true, too. "But isn't it too early yet?" he asked himself anxiously. "What if it fails? We aren't ready yet. But so be it! I must go."

There was a rustle in the passage, the door swung open, and Yelena came in.

Insarov rushed to her, trembling from head to foot, dropped on his knees in front of her, put his arms round her waist, and pressed his head to her body.

"You hadn't expected me, had you?" she said, panting. (She had run up the steps.) "My darling!" she put both her hands on his head and looked about her. "So

this is where you live! I had no difficulty in finding you—your landlord's daughter showed me the way. We came back the other day. I was going to write to you, but I changed my mind, thinking that I'd much rather come and see you. I can only stay a quarter of an hour. Get up and lock the door."

He rose, locked the door with alacrity, and, going back to her, took her hands. He could not speak for the joy that overwhelmed him. She looked smiling into his eyes—there was so much happiness in them that she was abashed.

"Wait," she said, gently taking away her hands, "let me take off my bonnet."

She untied the ribbons of her bonnet and threw it off; she then slipped the shawl off her shoulders, adjusted her hair, and sat on the small, shabby sofa. Insarov did not stir, gazing spellbound at her.

"Do sit down," she said as she pointed to the seat beside her, without raising her eyes.

Instead of the sofa, he sat down on the floor, at her feet.

"Here, take off my gloves," she said in a shaky voice. She was beginning to feel terrified.

He unbuttoned, then began to pull off her glove and, when it was half-way off, avidly pressed his lips to the white, delicate hand he had bared.

Yelena started, tried to push him gently away with her other hand, but he began to kiss it. Yelena withdrew it, he threw back his head—she looked into his face, bent forward, and their lips met.

A moment passed. She broke away, whispered, "No! No!" and stepped hastily up to the desk.

"I'm mistress here, am I not? You mustn't hide anything from me," she said, trying to sound casual and turning her back to him. "What a lot of papers you have! What are these letters?"

Insarov knitted his eyebrows.

"The letters?" he said, getting up. "You may read them."

Yelena turned them in her hand.

"There are so many of them, and they are written in so small a hand, while I must be going in a moment. I'll let them be. I hope they don't come from a rival. Why, they aren't written in Russian," she added, leafing through the thin sheets.

Insarov came up to her and touched her waist. She faced swiftly round, smiled happily at him, and leant against his shoulder.

"These letters are from Bulgaria, Yelena. My friends are calling me."

"Calling you now?"

"Yes, now. While there's time, while the way is still open."

Suddenly she threw her arms round his neck.

"You will take me with you, won't you?"

He clasped her to his heart.

"Oh, my wonderful girl, my heroine, how sweetly you said those words! But wouldn't it be a sin, wouldn't it be madness for me, a homeless, solitary man, to drag you along with me? And to a place like that, too!"

She shut his mouth with her hand.

"Hush! or I'll be angry with you, and shall never come again. Haven't we decided, haven't we settled everything between ourselves? Am I not your wife? Does a wife part with her husband?"

"Wives don't go to war," he murmured, with a rueful smile.

"That is, if they can stay at home. But how can I stay here?"

"You are an angel, Yelena! But you must bear in mind that I may have to leave Moscow—in two weeks. Attend-

ing lectures at the university or finishing my work here is out of the question now."

"What of it?" Yelena interjected. "You say you must leave soon? All right, do you want me to stay with you now, this very moment, for good, and never to go back home? Do you? Let us leave now if you wish!"

Insarov gathered her closer to his breast.

"So may God punish me," he exclaimed, "if I am doing wrong! From today on we are joined for ever!"

"Do I stay?" asked Yelena.

"No, my pure girl; no, my treasure. You must go home now, but be ready. We cannot settle this matter off hand; we have to consider everything. We need money and passports—"

"I have some money," Yelena interrupted, "eighty rubles."

"That isn't much, of course," Insarov remarked, "but it may come in handy just the same."

"I can get more, I can borrow, or ask Mother for some. No, I won't ask her. Well, I can sell my watch. Then I have earrings, two bracelets, some lace."

"Money isn't the point, Yelena; what about your passport?"

"Yes, indeed. I suppose I can't do without a passport, can I?"

"Of course not."

Yelena laughed.

"I just had an idea. I remember when I was a little girl our maid ran away. She was caught and forgiven, and lived with us for a long time after that. But still everybody called her Runaway Tatyana. I never thought at the time that I might become a runaway like her."

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Yelena?"

"Why should I be? It would be better to have a passport, of course. But if I cannot get one—"

"We shall take care of that later -you wait," said

Insarov. "Give me a chance to take my bearings and think it over. We'll discuss everything in detail. And as for money, I have some myself."

With her hand Yelena brushed back the hair that dropped on to his forehead.

"Oh, Dmitry! it will be fun travelling together!"

"Yes," said Insarov, "but when we are there—"

"Well," Yelena interrupted, "won't it also be fun to die together? But why die? We shall live, we are young. How old are you? Twenty-six, is it?"

"Yes."

"I am twenty. We still have plenty of time ahead. Ha! You were going to run away from me, Bulgarian! You didn't want any Russian love. Now I should like to see you try to get rid of me! But, oh, what would have become of us if I hadn't gone out to see you that day!"

"Yelena, you know what made me go away."

"I do—you were frightened of your love. But had you really no inkling that you were loved too?"

"Upon my honour I hadn't, Yelena."

She gave him a quick and unexpected kiss.

"That is just why I love you. And now, good-bye."

"Can't you stay any longer?" asked Insarov.

"No, I can't, dear. Do you think it was easy for me to get away alone? That quarter of an hour has long been over." She put on her shawl and bonnet. "Come to see us tomorrow evening. No—come the day after tomorrow. It will be awkward and dull, but it can't be helped; we'll see each other at least. Good-bye. Let me out." He embraced her for the last time. "Oh! You've broken my chain. My clumsy darling! Well, never mind. It's better so. I'll go to Kuznetsky Most and have it repaired. If they ask me where I have been I'll say I've been there." She took hold of the doorknob. "By the way, I forgot to tell you that M. Kurnatovsky will most likely propose to me one of these days. But this is what he'll

get." She pulled a long nose. "Good-bye. So long. I know my way now. See that you don't waste any time."

Yelena opened the door a little and listened; then, turning to Insarov, she nodded at him and slipped out.

He stood in front of the closed door for a moment, listening in his turn. The door opening into the courtyard banged shut. He walked over to the sofa, sat down, and covered his eyes with his hand. Never in his life had he experienced anything of the kind. "What have I done to deserve such love?" he thought. "Or is this a dream?"

But the subtle scent of mignonette, which Yelena had left in his poor, dark little room, reminded him of her visit. With it there seemed to linger in the air the sound of her young voice, her light footfall, and the warmth and freshness of her young, virgin body.

XXIV

Insarov decided to wait for more definite news, but in the meantime made preparations for the departure. There were great difficulties to be overcome. True, nothing stood in *his* way—he had only to apply for a passport; but what was he to do about Yelena? It was impossible to obtain a passport for her by legal means. Should he wed her in secret and then go to her parents? "Then they'd let us go," he thought. "And what if they didn't? We'd go just the same. But if they complained to the authorities? If— No. I had better try to get a passport somehow."

He made up his mind to seek—without mentioning any names, of course—the advice of an acquaintance of his, a retired or dismissed public prosecutor, an old hand at all sorts of confidential matters. That worthy lived a long way off; it took Insarov fully an hour to reach his

home in a wretched droshky, and, what is more, he did not find the man in; on his way back he was soaked to the skin by a sudden downpour. Next morning, despite a rather bad headache, Insarov made a second attempt. The retired prosecutor lent him an attentive ear, taking snuff now and then from a box adorned with the picture of a full-bosomed nymph, and looking askance at his visitor with sly little eyes, the colour of the snuff. Having heard him out, he asked for "a more specific exposition of the factual data"; but seeing that Insarov was none too eager to go into details—indeed, Insarov had been loth to come at all—he limited his advice to the suggestion that his visitor should first of all provide himself with *pieniądze*,* and asked him to call again, "when," he added, taking a snuff over the open box, "you are in a more trusting and less distrustful mood. As to the passport," he went on, as though speaking to himself, "it's a man-made thing. Suppose there's a lady travelling—who can tell whether she is Maria Bredikhina or Karoline Vogelmeyer?" Insarov was thoroughly disgusted, but he thanked the prosecutor and promised to drop in again in a couple of days.

That evening he called at Stakhov's. Anna Vasilyevna, who gave him a friendly welcome, chid him for having forgotten them, and finding him pallid, asked how he felt. Stakhov did not utter a word and merely looked at him with musingly casual curiosity. Shubin showed him the cold shoulder. But then Yelena surprised him. She had been waiting for him, and for his sake had put on the dress which she had worn that day they met in the chapel. But she greeted him with so much composure and was so gracious and light-heartedly cheerful that no one would have imagined that her fate was sealed and that what lent vivacity to her features, and lightness and

* Money (Polish).—*Tr.*

charm to her every movement, was secret consciousness of a happy love. She poured the tea instead of Zoya, chattering and joking; she knew that Shubin would be watching her, that Insarov would be unable to put on a mask and feign indifference, so she had armed herself beforehand. She had guessed right—Shubin kept his eyes fixed upon her, while Insarov was very moody and untalkative throughout the evening. She felt so completely happy that it occurred to her to tease him.

"What about that plan of yours—any progress?" she asked him suddenly.

Insarov was taken aback.

"What plan?" he murmured.

"Don't you remember?" she replied, laughing in his face, a happy laughter of which he alone knew the meaning. "I mean your Bulgarian reader for Russians."

"*Quelle bourde!*" Stakhov muttered.

Zoya sat down at the piano. Almost imperceptibly Yelena shrugged her shoulders and indicated the door with her eyes, as though dismissing Insarov. Then she touched the table twice with a finger and looked at him. He guessed that she would meet him in two days, and she flashed a smile as she saw that he had understood. Insarov rose to go, for he was not feeling well. Kurnatovsky came. Stakhov jumped up, raised his right hand above his head, and gently dropped it on to the chief secretary's palm. Insarov stayed a few moments longer to have a look at his rival. Yelena shook her head archly; the host did not deem it necessary to introduce the two men to each other, and Insarov left after exchanging a last glance with Yelena. Shubin sat pondering for a while, and then started a furious argument with Kurnatovsky over a legal problem he knew nothing about.

Insarov did not sleep that night, and in the morning he felt bad; nevertheless, he set about putting his papers in order and wrote some letters, though his head

felt heavy and somehow confused. By noon he had developed fever, and he could not take any food. As nightfall drew near the fever grew rapidly worse, aggravated by rheumatic pains in every limb and a racking headache. He lay down on the sofa on which Yelena had sat a day or two before. "Serves me right—I shouldn't have called on that old rogue," he said to himself, and tried to sleep. But the illness had already got the better of him. His veins throbbed terribly, his blood seemed to catch fire, his thoughts whirled and fluttered like startled birds. He lost consciousness. He lay flat on his back as though crushed by some weight, and suddenly he fancied he heard someone laughing softly and whispering over him; he forced his eyes open—the light of the unsnuffed candle hit them like a sword. What was this? He was faced by the old public prosecutor, in a silk dressing-gown with a foulard belt, just as he had seen him the day before. "Karoline Vogelmeyer," mumbled the toothless mouth. As Insarov stared at him the old man swelled and grew—now he was a tree, not a man. Insarov had to climb up its steep boughs. He went up, clutching at the boughs, and fell, striking his chest on a sharp rock, while Karoline Vogelmeyer, in the shape of a market-woman, squatted on the ground, babbling, "Pies! Pies! Pies!" Then there was a flow of blood, and sabres flashed unbearably. "Yelena!" he shrieked, and everything merged into a crimson chaos.

XXV

"There's somebody wants to see you—a locksmith or something," said Bersenev's servant to him next evening; he was distinguished by a stern manner towards his master and by a sceptical turn of mind.

"Tell him to come in," replied Bersenev.

The "locksmith" came in. Bersenev recognized in him the tailor who let the room to Insarov.

"What is it?" he asked the man.

"I must speak to you, sir," the tailor began, slowly shifting his weight from foot to foot and occasionally waving his right hand, with whose three last fingers he held on to his cuff. "My lodger—I wonder what's come over him—he's mighty ill."

"You mean Insarov?"

"Yes, sir, my lodger. He was still up and about yesterday morning, and in the evening he only asked for a glass of water, my missis brought him the water, but in the night he started jabbering—we could hear it through the partition; and this morning he couldn't speak at all, and lay like a log, and he's got such a terrible fever! I said to myself, 'Why, he may die any moment, so I'd better let the police know.' Because he's all alone. But the missis says to me, 'Go to that gentleman,' she says, 'who let a room to our lodger in the country; perhaps he'll tell you something or come over himself.' So I've come to you, sir, because we can't, I mean—"

Bersenev snatched his cap, thrust a ruble note into the tailor's hand, and the two of them sped to Insarov's.

They found Insarov unconscious, lying fully dressed on the sofa. His face had changed terribly. Bersenev at once told the landlord and his wife to undress Insarov and put him to bed, and hurried off to fetch a doctor. The doctor prescribed leeches, cantharides, and calomel, all in a lump, and ordered bleeding the sick man.

"Is it very bad?" asked Bersenev.

"Yes, very," answered the doctor. "He has acute pneumonia; it's peripneumonia at its worst, his brain may be affected too, and the subject is still young. His own strength is now turned against him. You sent for me a bit late, but I shall do all that science calls for."

The doctor was young himself and still believed in science.

Berseney stayed all night. The landlord and his wife proved kind-hearted and even efficient—that is, they were efficient as long as they were told what to do. A surgeon's assistant arrived, and medical torture began.

In the morning Insarov recovered consciousness for a few minutes; he recognized Berseney and asked, "I'm ill, am I?" He stared about him with the dull, listless perplexity of a very sick man, and relapsed into unconsciousness. Berseney went home, changed, and picking up a few books, returned to Insarov's. He had decided to install himself in the sick-room, for the time being at least. He had Insarov's bed screened off, and fitted out a place for himself by the sofa. The hours dragged cheerlessly on. Berseney went out only once to have a meal. Dusk fell. He lit a shaded candle and began to read. All was quiet in the room. Whispering, yawns, and sighs could be heard from behind the partition, where the landlord lived. Someone sneezed and was promptly reproved in a whisper. From behind the screen came a laboured, fitful breathing, broken now and again by a brief moan and the anguished tossing of a head on the pillow. Strange thoughts trailed through Berseney's mind. He was in the room of a man whose life hung by a thread and who, he knew it, was loved by Yelena. He recalled that night when Shubin had overtaken him to announce that she loved him, Berseney. And now— "What am I to do now?" he asked himself. "Shall I send Yelena word of his illness? Or shall I wait? This news is sadder than the news I gave her once before. How strange that fate should always be shoving me between them!" He decided that he had better wait. His eye fell on the desk piled with papers. "Will he be able to carry out his designs?" he thought. "Surely this is not the end

of everything?" He felt sorry for that ebbing young life, and resolved to do all he could to save it.

It was a dreadful night. The sick man was delirious. Several times Bersenev got up from the sofa, tiptoed to the bed, and listened mournfully to Insarov's gibberish. Only once did Insarov say with unexpected distinctness, "I don't want it, I don't want it, you mustn't—" Bersenev looked startled at Insarov; his face, haggard with suffering, was rigid, and his hands lay limply on the sheets. "I don't want it," he repeated, in a scarcely audible voice.

In the morning the doctor came again. He shook his head and prescribed some new medicines.

"The crisis is a long way off yet," he said, putting on his hat.

"And what will happen after the crisis?" asked Bersenev.

"After the crisis the outcome is *aut Caesar, aut nihil*."

The doctor left. Bersenev, who felt he needed some fresh air, walked up and down the street for a while. Then he went back and resumed his reading. He had finished Raumer long ago, and was studying Grote now.

Suddenly the door squeaked softly, and the landlord's daughter, covered with a heavy kerchief as usual, peeped cautiously in.

"There's that young lady," she said under her breath, "that gave me ten kopeks the other day."

The girl drew back, and Yelena came in.

Bersenev sprang up as though stung; but Yelena neither moved nor cried out. She seemed to have understood in a flash. A terrible pallor spread over her face; walking up to the screen, she looked in, wrung her hands, and stiffened. The next moment she would have rushed to Insarov, but Bersenev did not let her.

"What are you doing?" he said in a quivering whisper. "You may kill him!"

She tottered. He led her to the sofa and sat her down.

She gazed him in the face, then looked him all over, then stared at the floor.

"Is he dying?" she asked, in so cold and calm a voice that Bersenev was frightened.

"For heaven's sake, Yelena Nikolayevna," he said, "how can you? He is ill, of course, and very seriously, too. But we'll save him, I assure you we shall."

"Is he unconscious?" she asked in the same voice.

"Yes, he is—for the moment. That's how a disease like this always begins, but that doesn't mean anything —not a thing, believe me. Here, drink some water."

She looked up, and he realized that she had not heard him.

"If he dies," she said, in exactly the same voice, "I shall die too."

Insarov moaned softly; she trembled, clutched her head, and then began to undo her bonnet ribbons.

"What are you doing?" Bersenev asked her.

She made no answer.

"What are you doing?" he asked again.

"I'm staying here."

"You mean—for how long?"

"I don't know, perhaps till evening, or till morning, or for ever—I don't know."

"Please, Yelena Nikolayevna, think what you are doing. I couldn't have expected to see you here, of course, but I suppose you have dropped in for a short time. Don't forget they may miss you at home—"

"What if they do?"

"They will start looking for you. They will find you."

"What if they do?"

"Yelena Nikolayevna! Don't you see? He cannot protect you now."

She bowed her head, as though sunk in thought, put her handkerchief to her lips, and suddenly burst out sob-

bing with appalling vehemence. She flung herself face downwards on the sofa in an effort to stifle her sobs, but her entire body heaved and fluttered like a trapped little bird.

"Yelena Nikolayevna—for heaven's sake!" Bersenev said again and again, standing over her.

"Eh? What's that?" Insarov's voice rang out suddenly.

Yelena straightened up, and Bersenev stood stock-still. Awhile later he drew near the bed. Insarov's head lay on the pillow as limply as before; his eyes were closed.

"Is he delirious?" Yelena whispered.

"I think so," replied Bersenev, "but that doesn't matter; that is what generally happens, especially if—"

"When did he fall ill?" Yelena interrupted.

"The day before yesterday; I have been here since yesterday. You may rely on me, Yelena Nikolayevna. I shan't leave him for a second, and I will use every means to help him. I'll have a consultation held if necessary."

"He may die while I'm away!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands.

"I promise to inform you daily of the course of the illness, and if there should be any real danger—"

"Swear that you will send for me at once—at any time of day or night. You may write directly to me. It's all one to me now. Do you hear? Do you promise to do it?"

"I promise, so help me God."

"Swear it."

"I swear."

Suddenly she snatched up his hand, and before he could pull it away pressed her lips to it.

"Yelena Nikolayevna! How can you!" he gasped.

"No, no! Don't!" Insarov muttered, and drew a heavy sigh.

Yelena stepped near the screen, bit into her handkerchief, and gazed at the sick man for a long, long time. Tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Yelena Nikolayevna," said Bersenev, "he might come to and recognize you. God alone knows if that would do him good. Moreover, the doctor's due to arrive any moment."

Yelena picked up her bonnet from the sofa, put it on, and paused. Her eyes wandered dolefully about the room. She appeared to be plunged in recollections.

"I can't go," she whispered finally.

Bersenev squeezed her hand.

"Pull yourself together," he said, "calm yourself. You are leaving him in my care. I shall call on you tonight."

Yelena glanced at him, said, "Oh, my wonderful friend!" and rushed out, sobbing.

Bersenev leant against the door. A sorrowful and bitter sensation, not devoid of a strange comfort, gripped his heart. "'My wonderful friend'!" he thought, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Who's there?" came Insarov's voice.

Bersenev walked up to him.

"It is I, Dmitry Nikanorovich. Anything I can do for you? How do you feel?"

"Are you alone?"

"Yes."

"And where is she?"

"She? Who?" Bersenev queried in alarm.

Insarov did not answer at once.

"The mignonette," he whispered, and his eyes closed again.

XXVI

For fully eight days Insarov hovered between life and death. The doctor called often because he was young and the difficult case interested him. Shubin, hearing of Insarov's perilous condition, came to see him; so did his Bulgarian countrymen, among whom Bersenev recog-

nized the two strange men who had astonished him by their unexpected visit to the *ducha*. Everyone expressed sincere sympathy, and some offered to replace Bersenev at the sick-bed; but he would not hear of it, remembering his promise to Yelena. He saw her every day and surreptitiously—by word of mouth or by a note—gave her all the details of the course the illness was taking. She looked forward to seeing him with a sinking heart, and eagerly listened to and questioned him. She longed to go to Insarov's, but Bersenev implored her not to, for Insarov was rarely left by himself. The day she learnt about his illness, she nearly fell ill herself. As soon as she was back she locked herself up in her room; but she was called to dinner, and she came into the dining-room looking so pale that the terrified Anna Vasilyevna tried to send her to bed. But Yelena pulled herself together. "If he dies, I'll go too," she kept on telling herself. The idea comforted her, and enabled her to affect indifference. However, no one bothered her much; Anna Vasilyevna had her hands full with her gumboils; Shubin was working with furious energy; Zoya was indulging in melancholy, and proposed to read *Werther*; Stakhov strongly resented the "student's" frequent visits, the more so as his "projects" with regard to Kurnatovsky were making poor progress because the practical-minded chief secretary was dubious, and was biding his time. Yelena did not even thank Bersenev, for there are services for which one is ashamed to thank. Only once, during her fourth interview with him—Insarov had had a very bad night, and the doctor had hinted at a consultation—did she remind him of his oath. "All right, then, come along," he had said to her. She had begun to put on her street clothes. "No," he had said, "let us wait till tomorrow." Towards evening Insarov's condition had improved.

The torment lasted for eight days. Yelena appeared calm but could take no food, and got no sleep. All her

limbs ached dully; a dry, hot smoke seemed to fill her head. "Our young mistress is eating out her heart," her maid would say.

On the ninth day there finally came a change for the better. Yelena sat in the drawing-room beside Anna Vasilyevna, reading *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* aloud, though she hardly knew what she was doing, when Bersenev entered. Yelena looked at him—it was so swift and timid, so keen and anxious, the first glance she cast at him each time—and saw at once that he had good news. He was smiling, and nodding slightly at her; she rose to meet him.

"He has come to, he is safe, he will recover completely in a week from now," he whispered in her ear.

Yelena held out her hands, as though to ward off a blow, but said nothing; her lips quivered, and her face flushed scarlet. Bersenev fell into talk with Anna Vasilyevna; Yelena withdrew to her room, dropped on her knees, and began to pray, thanking God. Easy, joyful tears flowed from her eyes. Now she felt how utterly exhausted she was, and put her head on the pillow. "Poor Andrei Petrovich!" she whispered, and fell asleep at once, her eyelashes and cheeks wet with tears. It was long since she had slept or cried.

XXVII

Bersenev's prediction came true only in part. Although Insarov was out of danger, recovery was slow, and the doctor hinted at a deep shock affecting Insarov's entire constitution. For all that Insarov was up and moved about the room. Bersenev had gone back to his flat; but every day he went to see his friend, who was still weak, and every day informed Yelena of Insarov's health as before. Insarov did not dare to write to her, and only

alluded to her in talking with Bersenev, who, in his turn, told him with sham indifference about his visits to Stakhov's, trying, however, to make it clear to him that Yelena had been deeply disturbed but now was easier in her mind. Yelena did not write to Insarov, either; she had something different in mind.

One day, after Bersenev happily announced that the doctor had permitted Insarov to eat a cutlet and that soon he would probably be able to go out, she lowered her head thoughtfully.

"Guess what I want to tell you," she said.

Bersenev was embarrassed. He had understood.

"You probably want to tell me," he replied, looking away, "that you wish to see him."

Yelena blushed, and said in a barely audible voice, "Yes."

"Well, I think you can do that quite easily."

"Fie!" he thought, "what a nasty feeling I have!"

"You mean I have already—" said Yelena. "But I'm afraid—you say that now he is hardly ever left to himself."

"That's easy to remedy," replied Bersenev, still avoiding her gaze. "Of course, I can't forewarn him, but you may give me a note for him. Who could forbid you to write to an old acquaintance whose fate concerns you? There is nothing reprehensible in it. Make an appointment—I mean, write to tell him when you are coming."

"I feel ashamed," Yelena whispered.

"Write a note, I'll take it to him."

"There's no need for that, but I should like to ask you —please don't be offended, Andrei Petrovich— not to call on him tomorrow."

Bersenev bit his lip.

"Oh, I see. Very well, I shan't." Saying a few more words, he hurried off.

"So much the better, so much the better," he thought

on his way home. "I've learned nothing new, but so much the better. Why should I hang on to the edge of a nest that isn't mine? I don't regret anything, I have done what my conscience prompted me to do, but now I'm through with it. Let them do as they like. My father was right in saying, 'You and I aren't sybarites, my boy, we aren't aristocrats, minions of fortune or nature, or even martyrs; we are toilers, that's what we are—toilers!' So put on your leather apron, toiler, and go to the bench in your dark workshop! As to the sun, let it shine for others. Even in my obscure life there is something to take pride and rejoice in."

Next morning Insarov received a brief note from Yelena by the city post. It ran: "Wait for me, and refuse to see anyone. A. P. is not coming."

XXVIII

Immediately after reading Yelena's note, Insarov began to tidy his little room. He asked the landlady to take away the medicine bottles, discarded his dressing-gown, and donned his frock-coat. He was so weak and so happy that his head swam and his heart beat fast. His legs gave way under him; he dropped on to the sofa and looked at the clock. "It's a quarter to twelve now," he told himself. "She can't possibly come before noon. I must try to think about something else for the next quarter of an hour, or I shan't be able to bear it. She can't possibly come before—"

The door flew open: Yelena, wearing a light silk dress and looking very pallid, very fresh, young, and happy, came in and threw herself into his arms with a faint, joyous cry.

"You are alive, you are mine!" she said again and again, putting her arms round his neck and caressing

his head. He kept quite still, breathless from her nearness, her touch, the happiness he felt.

She sat by his side and clung to him, and gazed at him with that laughing and tenderly caressing expression which shines only in the eyes of a woman in love.

Suddenly her face veiled.

"How thin you've got, my poor Dmitry," she said, running her hand over his cheek, "and what a beard you have!"

"You are thinner too, my poor Yelena," he replied, kissing her fingers as she caressed his face.

She gaily shook her curls.

"Never mind. You will see how nicely we put on weight! The storm came, just as it did that day we met in the chapel, it came and went. Now we shall live!"

He smiled in reply.

"What days we've passed through, Dmitry, what cruel days! I can't imagine how people ever survive those they love. I always knew beforehand what Andrei Petrovich was going to tell me—really I did; my life went up or down with yours. Good morning, my Dmitry!"

He did not know what to say. He could have flung himself at her feet.

"There is something else I've noticed," she continued, brushing back his hair. "I noticed a great many things while you were ill—I discovered that when one is very, very unhappy, one is so foolishly attentive to all that goes on about one! Really, sometimes I sat watching a fly, but I was so cold and terrified at heart! But all that's over and done with, isn't it? Everything is bright ahead, isn't it?"

"*You* are ahead," replied Insarov, "and that makes everything bright for me."

"Don't I feel the same way! But do you remember that day when I came to see you, not the last time—no, not the last"—she shuddered involuntarily—"but when you

and I were talking, and I mentioned death, I don't know why; I little suspected then that death lay in wait for us. But now you are well, aren't you?"

"I feel much better, I'm almost well."

"You are well, you aren't dead. Oh, how happy I am!"

There was a pause.

"Yelena," said Insarov.

"Yes, dear?"

"Tell me, did it ever occur to you that my illness was a punishment meted out to us?"

Yelena looked gravely at him.

"It did, Dmitry. But I asked myself, 'Why should I be punished? What duty have I neglected, what is my transgression?' Perhaps my conscience isn't like other people's, but it was silent; or perhaps I have sinned against you? I might be a hindrance to you, I might stop you—"

"You won't stop me, Yelena, because we shall go on together."

"Yes, Dmitry, we shall go on together, I will follow you! It is my duty. I love you, and I know no other duty."

"Oh, Yelena!" said Insarov. "What unbreakable chains every word you utter puts on me!"

"Why talk of chains?" she replied. "You and I are free people. Yes," she continued, looking pensively at the floor, while her hand kept on stroking his hair, "I've been through a great deal lately, things I never had any idea about. If somebody had told me that I, a well-bred young lady, should be going out under various false pretexts to visit—just imagine!—a young man in his lodgings, how outraged I should have been! And yet it has all happened, and I'm not outraged at all. Not in the least!" she added, turning to Insarov.

He was gazing at her so adoringly that she let her hand glide from his hair down to his eyes.

"Dmitry," she began afresh, "you don't know anything

about it, but I saw you there, in that horrible bed, I saw you in the clutches of death, unconscious—"

"You did?"

"Yes."

He was silent for a moment.

"And Bersenev was here too?"

She nodded.

Insarov bent forward to her.

"Oh, Yelena!" he whispered. "I don't dare to look at you."

"Why not? Andrei Petrovich has such a kind heart! I wasn't ashamed before him. Why should I be? I don't mind telling the whole wide world that I'm yours. As for Andrei Petrovich, I trust him as if he were my brother."

"He saved me!" exclaimed Insarov. "He's the most generous, the most kind-hearted man I've ever met!"

"Yes. And do you know that I owe him everything? Do you know he was the first to tell me you loved me? If only I could disclose everything! Yes, he is a most generous man."

Insarov looked closely at Yelena.

"He is in love with you, isn't he?"

Yelena cast down her eyes.

"He loved me," she said in an undertone.

Insarov squeezed her hand.

"You Russians have hearts of gold!" he said. "To think that he, of all people, should have tended me and spent sleepless nights over me! And you, too, my angel! Not a reproach, no hesitation—and all this for me!"

"Yes, yes, for you, because you are loved. Ah, Dmitry! How strange it is! I think I've already told you that, but even so I take pleasure in telling you again, and you'll be pleased to hear it once more, that when I first saw you—"

"Why are you crying?" Insarov broke in.

"Crying? Am I crying?" She wiped her eyes with her

handkerchief. "How silly you are! Not to know that one may also cry from happiness! As I was saying, when we first met you didn't strike my imagination, really you didn't. I remember that at first I liked Shubin much better, though I've never loved him, and as for Andrei Petrovich, there was a moment when I thought perhaps he was the one. You made no impression on me. But afterwards you seemed to take my heart with both hands!"

"Have pity on me," said Insarov. He tried to get up, but at once sank back.

"What's the matter?" Yelena asked him anxiously.

"Nothing, it is just that I'm a bit weak. This happiness is still too much for me."

"Keep quiet, then. Kindly stop moving and getting excited," she added, shaking a finger at him. "You shouldn't have taken off your dressing-gown. It is too early for you to strut about in a coat. Sit still, and I shall tell you fairy-tales. You just listen and be quiet. You mustn't talk much after your illness."

She began to tell him about Shubin, Kurnatovsky, and what she had been doing during the last two weeks, and said that, judging by the newspapers, war was imminent and that hence, as soon as he was quite well again, they would have to find a way to leave without losing a minute. She talked sitting by his side, leaning against his shoulder.

He listened to her, his face paling and flushing alternately, and made several attempts to stop her; then suddenly he straightened up.

"Yelena," he said in a strangely sharp voice, "leave me, please—go."

"What!" she murmured in amazement. "Aren't you feeling well?" she added quickly.

"Yes, I am, but please go."

"I don't understand. Are you sending me away? What are you doing?" she said suddenly, seeing him bend

down almost to the floor and put his lips to her feet. "Don't do that, Dmitry. Dmitry!"

He rose.

"So leave me! You see, Yelena, when I fell ill I didn't lose consciousness at once. I knew I was on the brink of death. Even in high fever, even when I was delirious, I had a vague feeling it was my death coming, and I said farewell to life, to you, to everything, I gave up hope. And all at once this rebirth, this light after darkness, you—you sitting by my side, in my room—your voice, your breathing. This is more than I can bear! I feel that I love you passionately, I hear you calling yourself mine, I'm losing my hold over myself— Go!"

"Dmitry," Yelena whispered, hiding her head on his shoulder. She had understood.

"Yelena," he went on, "I love you, and you know I do, I'm ready to give my life for you— But why have you come to me now that I'm weak, that I have no control of myself, that my blood is on fire? You are mine, you say—you love me—"

"Dmitry," she said again, blushing a deep red, and clung still closer to him.

"Yelena, have pity on me—go, I feel I may die, I may not be able to withstand this emotion. My heart is crying out for you— Think that death almost separated us—and now you are here, in my arms— Yelena!"

She quivered from head to foot.

"Take me, then," she whispered, almost inaudibly.

XXIX

Stakhov was pacing his study, his eyebrows knitted. Shubin sat at the window with crossed legs, calmly smoking a cigar.

"Please stop walking up and down," he said, shaking

the ashes off his cigar. "I've been waiting for you to speak up, watching you—my neck is hurting. Besides, there's something tense, something melodramatic in your gait."

"You must always be poking fun at people," replied Stakhov. "You won't consider my position. You refuse to understand that I'm used to that woman, that I'm attached to her if you like, that her absence must be painful to me. October is in already, winter is round the corner. Whatever can she be doing in Reval?"

"I suppose she's knitting stockings—for herself, not for you."

"Go on—laugh; but let me tell you that I have never known a woman like her. Her honesty, her unselfishness—"

"Has she presented her promissory note for payment?" asked Shubin.

"Her unselfishness," Stakhov repeated, raising his voice, "is surprising. I am told there are a million other women in the world; but I say to that, 'Show me those million women. Show them to me,' say I. *Ces femmes, qu'on me les montre!* And the excruciating thing is, she doesn't write to me!"

"You are as eloquent as Pythagoras," remarked Shubin, "but do you know what I'd suggest?"

"Yes?"

"When Augustina Christianovna comes back—do you understand?"

"Of course I do. Well?"

"When you see her—do you follow me?"

"Of course I follow you!"

"Try to give her a thrashing, and see what happens."

Stakhov turned away in disgust.

"I thought you were going to give me some real advice! But what can one expect of a man like you? Of an artist, a man without rules—"

"Without rules! Well, they say your favourite, Mr. Kurnatovsky, who's a man with rules, won a hundred silver rubles from you last night. You'll agree that it was most tactless of him."

"What of it? We played for money. Of course, I could have expected— But his qualities are so little appreciated in this house—"

"—that he probably said to himself, 'Come what may!' " Shubin cut in. " 'It is still a moot point whether he'll be my father-in-law or not, while a hundred rubles won't hurt a man who takes no bribes.' "

"Father-in-law my eye! *Vous rêvez, mon cher.* To be sure, any other girl would have jumped at a fiancé like him. After all, he's clever and efficient, made good on his own, drudged in two provinces—"

"And hoodwinked the Governor of X Province," remarked Shubin.

"Perhaps so. Most likely the man asked for it. And he's a man of action, a business man—"

"And a good hand at cards," Shubin put in again.

"Well, yes, he is. But Yelena Nikolayevna — She's unaccountable. I should like to meet somebody who could tell me what she wants. She is cheerful one moment and sad the next; first she gets so thin it breaks your heart to see her, then she suddenly puts on weight, and all that for no apparent reason."

An ungainly footman came in carrying a tray with a cup of coffee, a cream-pot, and rusks.

"The father likes the man," Stakhov continued, brandishing a rusk, "but what does his daughter care! That was all right in the old patriarchal days, but nowadays we've changed all that. *Nous avons changé tout ça.* Nowadays a young lady talks with anyone she likes, and reads anything she likes. She goes out all alone, without a footman or maid, just as if she were in Paris; and all that is accepted. The other day I asked where Yelena

Nikolayevna was. They told me she had gone out. But nobody knew where she'd gone. Do you call that proper?"

"Please take your cup and let the man go," said Shubin. "Didn't you say we musn't *-devant les domestiques?"* he added in an undertone.

The footman loured at Shubin, while Stakhov took the cup, poured himself some cream, and grabbed a handful of rusks.

"I was trying to say that I don't mean anything in this house," he said when the footman had left. "That's all. You see, nowadays people are judged by their appearance. A man may be shallow and stupid, but he's respected if he looks important enough. Another man may be endowed with abilities that could—that could prove very useful, but because he is too modest—"

"Are you a statesman, Nikolai, my boy?" asked Shubin in a squeaking voice.

"Stop that tomfoolery!" Stakhov cried angrily. "You are forgetting yourself! And that is fresh proof that I don't mean anything in this house, not a thing!"

"Anna Vasilyevna tyrannizes you, poor dear!" said Shubin, stretching himself. "You should be ashamed of yourself, really! You'd better think of some present for Anna Vasilyevna. It'll be her birthday in a few days, and you know how much she makes of the least sign of attention on your part."

"Yes, you are right!" Stakhov hastened to answer. "I'm greatly obliged to you for reminding me. Why, of course I must do it. Indeed, I have a little necklace that I bought at Rosenstrauch's a couple of days ago; but I'm not sure it will do."

"You bought it for that Reval woman, didn't you?"

"That is—I—yes, I thought—"

"In that case it certainly will do."

Shubin rose from his chair.

"Where shall we go tonight, Pavel Yakovlevich?" asked Stakhov ingratiatingly, looking into Shubin's eyes.

"Aren't you going to the club?"

"I mean after that."

Shubin stretched himself again.

"I'm sorry, Nikolai Artemyevich, but I must work tomorrow. We'll go some other time." He walked out.

Stakhov frowned, paced the room once or twice, and then, taking a velvet case with the "little necklace," examined it at length as he wiped it with his foulard handkerchief. Then he sat in front of the mirror and got busy carefully combing his thick black hair, gravely tilting his head first to the right, then to the left, pushing out his cheek with his tongue, and keeping a keen eye on the parting. Someone coughed discreetly behind his back; he turned round and saw the footman who had brought the coffee.

"What d'you want?" he asked the man.

"Nikolai Artemyevich," said the footman, not without a touch of solemnity, "you are our master."

"I know. Well?"

"Nikolai Artemyevich, sir, may it please you not to be angry with me. Only, seeing that I have been in your service since boyhood, that is, because I am eager to serve you like a slave—I must report to you—"

"Out with it, man!"

The footman shuffled a little.

"You said, sir," he began, "that you didn't know where Yelena Nikolayevna went. But I have some knowledge of it."

"You're a lying fool!"

"That is as it may please you, sir, but I saw the young lady four days ago as she walked into a house."

"Where? What house?"

"Near Povarskaya Street. That isn't far from here. I asked the gate-keeper who were the lodgers."

Stakhov stamped his foot.

"Shut up, you scamp! How dare you? Yelena Nikolayevna visits the poor out of kindness, and you— Get out, you fool!"

The terrified footman darted to the door.

"Wait!" cried Stakhov. "What did the gate-keeper say?"

"He—he didn't say anything. He said she went to a stu—student."

"Shut up, you scamp! Look here, you scoundrel, if only you let that out even in your sleep—"

"How could I, sir!"

"Shut up! If only you blab about it—if somebody—if I ever hear— You won't hide from me even in hell! Do you hear? Now get out!"

The man vanished.

"O Lord! What's all this?" thought Stakhov, finding himself alone. "What did that idiot tell me? Eh? Anyway, I must find out about that house and those who live in it. I must go there myself. So that's what we've come to! *Un laquais! Quelle humiliation!"*

After repeating "*Un laquais!*" aloud, Stakhov locked up the necklace in the secretaire and went to Anna Vasilyevna. He found her in bed, with a bandaged cheek. But the contemplation of her suffering merely irritated him, and very soon he drove her to tears.

XXX

Meanwhile the storm that had been gathering in the East broke out—Turkey declared war on Russia. The term fixed for the evacuation of the principalities had expired; the Sinop *débâcle* was not far off. The letters Insarov had received of late insisted on his coming home. He had not yet recovered completely; he felt weak and

had a cough and light fits of fever now and then, but he hardly ever stayed in the house. His soul was on fire, and he had no time for his illness. He was constantly meeting people in secret all over Moscow, spent whole nights writing, and was sometimes away from home for several days on end. He had told his landlord that he would leave soon, and had presented him in advance with his simple furniture. Yelena was also preparing for the journey. One rainy evening she sat in her room, hemming handkerchiefs and listening with involuntary dejection to the howling wind. Her maid came in to announce that her father was in her mother's bedroom and wanted to see her. "Your mother's crying," she whispered to Yelena as she was going out, "and your father's very angry."

Yelena shrugged her shoulders, and entered Anna Vasilyevna's bedroom. Stakhov's soft-hearted wife reclined in an adjustable arm-chair, sniffing eau-de-Cologne from her handkerchief, while he himself stood by the fireplace, buttoned up to his chin, wearing a starched collar and a high, stiff cravat, his bearing vaguely suggestive of a parliamentary orator. With a rhetorical gesture he indicated a chair to his daughter, and when she looked at him questioningly, he said with dignity, without, however, turning his head, "Pray be seated." Yelena sat down.

Anna Vasilyevna tearfully blew her nose. Stakhov thrust his right hand into the breast of his frock-coat.

"I have summoned you, Yelena Nikolayevna," he began after a long pause, "in order to have an explanation with you, or rather to demand an explanation from you. I am displeased with you—no, that is too mildly put: your behaviour pains, insults me— and also your mother, whom you see here."

Stakhov used none but the bass notes of his voice. Yelena glanced at him, then at Anna Vasilyevna, and went pale.

"There was a time," Stakhov continued, "when daugh-

ters did not presume to look down on their parents, when parental authority made the recalcitrant tremble. I regret to say that time is past, or that is what many people think. But, believe me, there still are laws forbidding—forbidding—in short, there still are laws. Kindly mark that: there are laws!"

"But, Father—" Yelena tried to put in.

"Pray do not interrupt me. Let us look back upon the past. Anna Vasilyevna and I have done our duty. We have stinted nothing to educate you, neither expenses nor care. What benefit you have derived from that care, from those expenses, is beside the point. But I was entitled to expect—Anna Vasilyevna and I were entitled to expect—that you would at least hold sacred those moral rules which—*que nous vous avons inculquées*, which we had imparted to you as our only daughter. We were entitled to expect that none of the newfangled ideas would affect that—shall I say sacred?—possession. Yet what is the result? I omit any mention of the frivolity proper to your sex and your age; but who could have imagined that you would forget yourself to the extent of—"

"Father," said Yelena, "I know what you mean."

"No, you don't!" Stakhov cried in a falsetto, forgetting all about the majesty of his parliamentary bearing, the smooth gravity of his discourse, and his bass notes. "You don't know, you insolent hussy!"

"For heaven's sake, Nicolas," stammered Anna Vasilyevna, "*vous me faites mourir.*"

"Don't say *que je vous fais mourir*, Anna Vasilyevna! You cannot imagine what I am going to tell you—the worst is still coming, I warn you!"

Anna Vasilyevna was dumbfounded.

"No," Stakhov went on, turning to Yelena, "you don't know what I mean!"

"I have offended you—" she began.

"Ah! At last you said it!"

"I have offended you," Yelena continued, "by not having confessed long ago—"

"Do you know," Stakhov cut in, "that I could kill you by a single word?"

Yelena looked up.

"Yes, madam, by a single word! Don't stare at me!" He crossed his arms on his breast. "May I ask you whether you are familiar with a certain house near Povarskaya? Have you ever visited that house?" He stamped his foot. "Answer me, you shameless girl, and don't try to fool me! Our servants, lackeys, madam, *de vils laquais*, have seen you call on your—"

Yelena blushed a deep red, and her eyes flashed.

"I have no need to deceive you," she said. "Yes, I have visited that house."

"Splendid! Did you hear that, Anna Vasilyevna? I take it you know who lives there?"

"Yes, I do—my husband."

Stakhov stared blankly at her.

"Your what?"

"My husband," Yelena repeated. "I am married to Dmitry Nikanorovich Insarov."

"You? Married?" Anna Vasilyevna brought out lamely.

"Yes, Mother. Please forgive me. We were secretly wedded two weeks ago."

Anna Vasilyevna collapsed in her arm-chair; Stakhov took two steps back.

"Married! Married to that ragamuffin, that Montenegrin! The daughter of a hereditary nobleman, Nikolai Stakhov, married to a tramp, a wretched liberal! Without her parents' blessing! Do you imagine I shall put up with that? That I shan't take the matter to the authorities? That I shall permit you to—that you—that—I shall have you sent to a nunnery and him to a convict labour gang! Anna Vasilyevna, kindly tell her this very minute that you disinherit her!"

"Nikolai Artemyevich, for heaven's sake!" groaned Anna Vasilyevna.

"How did it happen, and when? Who married you? Where? How? My God! Whatever will our friends and everybody else say! You shameless pretender! How could you live in your parents' house after doing such a thing? Were you not afraid of—heavenly punishment?"

"Father," said Yelena firmly, though she was shaking from head to foot, "you may do by me as you please, but you are wrong in accusing me of shamelessness and pretence. I didn't want to—upset you beforehand, but one of these days I should have told you everything anyway, because my husband and I are leaving next week."

"Leaving? Where are you going?"

"To his country, Bulgaria."

"To the Turks!" exclaimed Anna Vasilyevna, and fainted.

Yelena rushed to her mother.

"Keep off!" roared Stakhov, grabbing his daughter's arm. "Keep off, unworthy one!"

Just then the door opened, and there appeared a pale-faced head with flashing eyes; it was Shubin's head.

"Nikolai Artemyevich!" he shouted at the top of his voice. "Augustina Christianovna is back and calling you!"

Stakhov wheeled furiously round, shook his fist at Shubin, wavered for a second, and hurried out.

Yelena dropped at her mother's feet and clasped her knees.

Uvar Ivanovich lay on his bed. A collarless shirt with a large stud enveloped his stout neck and spread over his almost feminine chest in wide, loose folds, leaving bare a big cross of wood and an amulet. A light blanket covered his ample limbs. A candle was burning dimly on the night table, beside a mug of kvass, and sitting woebegone on the bed, at his feet, was Shubin.

"Yes," he said pensively, "she's married and about to leave. Your precious nephew shouted and raised hell. He had locked himself up in the bedroom to keep it private, but he could be heard by the coachmen, to say nothing of servants and maids. He's storming and raging even now; he almost picked a fight with me, and he's making a lot of fuss over his fatherly curse. But he can't do anything. Anna Vasilyevna is crushed, but she's more distressed by her daughter's coming departure than by her marriage."

Uvar Ivanovich twiddled his fingers.

"She's a mother," he said, "so she—you know."

"Your nephew," Shubin continued, "threatens to take the matter to the Metropolitan and the Governor-General and the Minister, but it will all end up in her leaving. Nobody wants to ruin the happiness of his own daughter. He'll ride the high horse a bit more and then climb down."

"They have—no right," remarked Uvar Ivanovich, and took a draught of kvass.

"No, they haven't. And the wave of condemnation and gossip and rumour that's going to sweep Moscow! She isn't afraid of it. However, she's above that sort of thing. But it's horrible even to think about the place she's going to. It's so far away, such a God-forsaken region! What's in store for her there? I feel as if she were leaving an inn at night, in a terrific snow-storm. She's going away from her country and family, and yet I understand her. Who is she leaving behind? What sort of people has she met here? Men like Kurnatovsky and Bersenev and myself, and we are the best of the lot, mind you. So what has she to regret? The only trouble is, they say her husband—damn it, I find it hard to utter the word—they say Insarov coughs blood; that's bad. I saw him the other day, his face was fit to model Brutus from. Do you know who Brutus was, Uvar Ivanovich?"

"What's there to know? Just a fellow."

"Exactly—'a fellow of infinite jest.' Yes, he has a marvellous face, but it's the face of a sick man, very sick."

"Doesn't matter—when it comes to fighting," said Uvar Ivanovich.

"It doesn't matter when it comes to fighting—you are right. Your comments are most apt tonight, but it does matter when it's a question of living. Because I'm sure she will want to enjoy life with him."

"Well, they're young," returned Uvar Ivanovich.

"Yes, they're young, and it's a glorious, a brave cause. Death, life, struggle, fall, triumph, love, freedom, homeland—it's wonderful! God grant it to all! It's better than sitting in a slough up to your neck and pretending not to care, when you really don't care. But there the strings are drawn taut, they must resound throughout the world or snap!"

Shubin dropped his head on his chest.

"Yes," he continued, after a long pause, "Insarov is worthy of her. However, what nonsense! Nobody's worthy of her. Insarov— What's the use of false humility? I'll concede that he's a real man who can stand up for himself, though so far he's been doing the same as we ordinary mortals; but are we really so very worthless? Am *I* worthless, Uvar Ivanovich? Has God given me nothing at all? Hasn't he given me some ability and talent? Who knows if Pavel Shubin's name will not be renowned some day? Here's a copper coin lying on your table. Who knows if some day, perhaps a hundred years from now, his grateful descendants will not use this coin to erect a monument to Pavel Shubin?"

Uvar Ivanovich raised himself on his elbow and stared at the impassioned artist.

"It'll be a long wait," he said at last, twiddling his fingers as usual. "We were talking about somebody else, and here you are—er—talking about yourself."

"O great philosopher of the Russian land!" exclaimed Shubin. "Every word you utter is pure gold, and it's not to me that a monument should be erected, but to you, and I will undertake it. I'll model you as you're lying now, in that posture of which it's hard to say whether there's more indolence or strength in it. You have smitten my selfishness and ambition with the shaft of a just reproach! You are quite right—we mustn't talk about ourselves, mustn't brag. We still have no real men, however much we look for them. What we have is either small fry, rodents, little Hamlets, brutes, ignoramuses groping in subterranean darkness, or pushers, millers of the wind, and drumsticks. Or it's that other sort of people, those that have analyzed themselves with disgusting precision, that keep feeling the pulse of every single sensation and reporting to themselves: this is what I feel and that is what I think. A useful and sensible occupation! Surely if there were any real men among us, that girl, that sensitive soul, wouldn't leave us, wouldn't slip away like a fish escaping into the water. What does it all mean, Uvar Ivanovich? When will our time come? When will real men be born in this country?"

"Give them time," replied Uvar Ivanovich, "they'll come yet."

"Will they? Native soil! Black-earth force! Did you say they would come? Mind that I shall record what you said. But why are you putting out the candle?"

"I'm sleepy. Good night."

XXXI

Shubin was right—the unexpected news of Yelena's marriage nearly killed Anna Vasilyevna. She took to her bed. Stakhov demanded that she should not admit her daughter into her presence. He seemed to rejoice at the

opportunity to show himself complete master of the house, the head of the family. He kept on fuming and bawling at the servants, adding now and again, "I'll show you who I am, you'll hear from me yet—you just wait!" As long as he was at home Anna Vasilyevna could not see Yelena and had to content herself with the company of Zoya, who attended most diligently upon her, thinking the while to herself, "*Diesen Insaroff vorziehen—und wem!*" But as soon as Stakhov left, which happened rather frequently, for Augustina Christianovna *was* back, Yelena would come to her mother, who would gaze at her in silence, her eyes dimmed with tears. That mute reproach went deeper into Yelena's heart than any other, and made her feel infinite compassion akin to repentance.

"Mother, Mother dear!" she would say, kissing her mother's hands, "what else could I have done? It wasn't my fault, I love him and couldn't have done otherwise. You may blame fate: it brought me together with a man whom Father doesn't like, and who is now taking me away from you."

"Ah!" Anna Vasilyevna would interrupt. "Don't remind me! It makes me sick at heart to think where you are going!"

"Mother," Yelena would reply, "think that it might have been worse, that I might have died, and let that comfort you, if nothing else can."

"I don't hope ever to see you again, anyway. Either you will end your days over there, somewhere in a hut"—Anna Vasilyevna pictured Bulgaria as a sort of Siberian tundra—"or the separation will kill me!"

"Don't say that, dearest Mother, we shall meet yet, God willing. And there are towns in Bulgaria no worse than ours."

"Towns! There's a war going on there now; I am sure there are guns booming whichever way you turn. How soon are you leaving?"

"Very soon—if only Father doesn't— He says he will go to law, he threatens to divorce us."

Anna Vasilyevna would raise her eyes heavenwards.

"No, Lena dear, he won't go to law. I should never have consented to your marriage myself, I would rather have died. But what's done cannot be undone, and I won't let anybody disgrace my daughter."

A few days passed thus. One evening Anna Vasilyevna finally screwed up her courage and locked herself up with her husband in her bedroom. The entire household cowered, hushed. Nothing could be heard at first; then came Stakhov's rumbling voice, then an argument was started, and there was shouting and even something like moans. Shubin was about to rush to the rescue again, aided by the maids and Zoya; but the noise in the bedroom subsided little by little, toned down to a conversation, and died out altogether. There were occasional low sobs, but they stopped too. Keys jingled, the secretaire could be heard screeching as someone unlocked it. The door opened, and Stakhov emerged from it. He glared at those he came across, and left for the club. Anna Vasilyevna summoned Yelena, embraced her eagerly, and said, weeping bitterly, "It is settled. He won't make trouble, and there is nothing more to keep you from leaving—from forsaking us."

"May Dmitry come and thank you?" Yelena asked her mother as soon as she had regained some of her calm.

"Wait a little, dear, I cannot at the moment set eyes on the man who's taking you from me. I shall do that yet before you leave."

"Before we leave," echoed Yelena sadly.

Stakhov had agreed "not to make trouble"; but Anna Vasilyevna did not tell her daughter the price of the compromise. She did not say that she had promised to pay all his debts, and had given him a thousand silver rubles cash down. Furthermore, he had flatly refused to see

Insarov, whom he insisted on calling a Montenegrin, and, upon arriving at the club, had begun without rhyme or reason to talk to his cards partner, a retired engineer general, about Yelena's marriage. "Have you heard," he had said, affecting a casual tone, "that my daughter has married a student—probably from too much learning?" The general had eyed him through his spectacles, grunted "Ahem!" and asked him what trumps he wished to play.

XXXII

It was late November, and the day of departure was drawing near. Insarov had long since finished his preparations, and was anxious to get out of Moscow as soon as possible. The doctor, too, urged him to make haste. "What you need is a warm climate," he told him. "You'll never get well here." Yelena fretted too; Insarov's pallor and leanness worried her. Often she studied his changed features in vague alarm. Her position in her parents' house was becoming intolerable. Her mother bewailed her as though her daughter were dead, while her father treated her with cold contempt; the coming separation gnawed at his heart, too, but he considered it his duty—the duty of a slighted father—to dissemble his sentiments, his weakness. At last Anna Vasilyevna said she wanted to see Insarov. He was led to her on the sly through the back-door. She could not speak long after he had entered her room, nor could she bring herself to look at him. He sat down beside her arm-chair and, calmly respectful, waited for her to break the silence. Yelena sat holding her mother's hand. Finally Anna Vasilyevna looked up, said, "May God be your judge, Dmitry Nikanorovich, I—" and faltered, a reproach dying unspoken on her lips. "But you are ill!" she exclaimed. "Yelena, he is ill!"

"I was ill, Anna Vasilyevna," answered Insarov, "and I have not quite recovered as yet; but I hope my country's air will completely restore my health."

"Yes—Bulgaria!" Anna Vasilyevna murmured, and thought to herself, "Good Lord, a Bulgarian, a dying man, with a hollow voice and eyes as big as plates, nothing but skin and bone, wears a coat that hangs on him as if it were somebody else's, and he's as yellow as a crow's foot—and she is his wife, and loves him—I must be dreaming!" But the next moment she took herself in hand. "Dmitry Nikanorovich," she said, "is it absolutely—absolutely necessary that you should leave?"

"It is, Anna Vasilyevna."

She looked at him.

"Ah, Dmitry Nikanorovich, God forbid that you should experience what I am experiencing now! You promise to take care of her, to love her, don't you? You won't be needy as long as I live."

Tears choked her. She spread out her arms, and Yelena and Insarov clung to her.

* * *

At last the fatal day came. It had been agreed that Yelena should say good-bye to her parents at home and then start the journey from Insarov's lodging. They were to leave at noon. At a quarter to twelve, Berseney came to see them off. He had expected to find at Insarov's some of his countrymen, who would wish to see him off; but these had left earlier, and so had the two mysterious persons familiar to the reader—they had been witnesses at Insarov's wedding. The tailor greeted the "good master" with a bow; he had taken a drop too much, probably because he was sorry his lodger was going, or happy to have acquired the furniture, and his wife soon came and took him away. The luggage was packed and ready—a

roped trunk stood on the floor. Bersenev was sunk in thought, many a memory drifting through his mind.

It was well past twelve o'clock, and a sleigh stood waiting, but the young couple had not yet arrived. Finally there was a hurried footfall on the stairs, and Yelena entered, accompanied by Insarov and Shubin. Yelena's eyes were red; she had left her mother lying in a swoon; the parting had been exceedingly painful. It was more than a week since Yelena had last seen Bersenev, who had become a rare visitor at Stakhov's. She had not expected to meet him; she cried, "You here! Thank you for coming!" and rushed into his arms. Insarov embraced him in his turn. An agonizing silence set in. What could those three say? What did those three hearts feel? Shubin realized the necessity of putting an end to that agony by saying something.

"Here's our trio again, gathered for the last time," he said. "Let us bow to the will of destiny and remember our past by a kind word as we start a new life with God's blessing! 'God bless our weary journey,' he began to sing, and broke off, suddenly feeling ashamed and ill at ease. It is a sin to sing in the presence of the dying, and at that moment the past he had mentioned, the past of those gathered there, was dying in that room. Even though it was dying only to be reborn to a new life, it was dying just the same.

"Well, Yelena," said Insarov, "it looks as if we were ready. Everything is paid for and packed. All we have to do is to take this trunk downstairs. Oh, landlord!"

The landlord came in with his wife and daughter. Swaying slightly, he listened to Insarov's instructions, shouldered the trunk, and sped downstairs, his boots clattering on the steps.

"Now we must sit down, according to the Russian custom," remarked Insarov.

They sat down: Bersenev placed himself on the old

sofa, Yelena sat beside him, and the landlady and her daughter huddled together on the doorstep. No one spoke; they all smiled stiffly, though none of them knew why; everyone would have liked to say something before parting, and everyone—except, of course, the landlady and her daughter, both of whom were just staring—sensed that at such moments it was only permissible to say something commonplace, that any significant, or clever, or merely heartfelt word would be out of place, would almost ring false. Insarov rose first, and crossed himself.

"Farewell, our little room!" he exclaimed.

There were kisses—the resounding but chilly kisses of separation—parting, unfinished wishes, promises to write, the last, half-choked words of farewell.

Yelena, bathed in tears, climbed into the sleigh. Insarov carefully covered her feet with a rug. Shubin, Bersenev, the landlord, his wife, his daughter with the inevitable kerchief on her head, the gate-keeper, and an apprentice in a striped smock, whom nobody knew, were standing near the steps when a sumptuous sleigh, drawn by a high-mettled thoroughbred, dashed into the courtyard and out of it jumped Stakhov, brushing the snow from the collar of his greatcoat.

"You are still here, thank goodness!" he cried, running up to the other sleigh. "Yelena, here's our last parental blessing." He took from his frock-coat pocket a small icon sewn up in a velvet bag, and tied it round her neck. She burst out sobbing and kissed his hands, while his driver produced a bottle of champagne and three glasses from the front of the sleigh.

"Well," said Stakhov, the tears dropping fast on the beaver collar of his coat, "we must see you off properly – and we wish you –" He began to pour out the champagne; his hands were trembling, the foam rose over the brim and dripped on the snow. He took one of the glasses, and the other two he handed to Yelena and Insarov.

who was already seated beside her. "Good luck to you—" Stakhov began, but could not go on; he drank the wine, and so did the others. "Now for you, gentlemen," he added, turning to Shubin and Bersenev; but just then the driver started the horses. Stakhov ran beside the sleigh. "Mind you write!" he said, his voice breaking. Yelena leant out, said, "Good-bye, Father, Andrei Petrovich, Pavel Yakovlevich, good-bye, everybody, good-bye, Russia!" and sat back. The driver swung his whip and whistled; the sleigh turned from the gate to the right, its runners crunching, and was gone.

XXXIII

It was a bright April day. Rocking smoothly with every push of the long oar, on which the gondolier bore down, a sharp-prowed gondola was gliding over the broad lagoon separating Venice from the Lido, a narrow strip of silt. On soft leather cushions in the low cabin sat Yelena and Insarov.

Yelena's features had not changed much since she had left Moscow, but they wore a different expression now—sterner and more concentrated—and her eyes looked more confident. Her body was in full bloom, and her hair, fringing a white forehead and fresh cheeks, seemed richer than ever. It was only her lips that betrayed, by a barely visible line when she was not smiling, the constant presence of a hidden anxiety. Insarov's face, on the other hand, retained its former expression, but his features had undergone a terrible change. He had thinned and aged, and was pallid and stooped. He coughed almost continuously, with a short, dry cough, and his sunken eyes shone with a strange light. On his way from Russia he had lain in a Vienna hospital for nearly two months, and they had not arrived in Venice until late March. From

Venice he expected to make his way to Serbia and Bulgaria through Zara, all other routes being barred to him. War was raging already on the Danube; Britain and France had declared war on Russia, and all the Slav countries were astir and preparing to rise.

The gondola came alongside the inner rim of the Lido. Yelena and Insarov set out along a narrow, sandy path, bordered with consumptive little trees (they are planted every year, and every year they die), to where the sea lapped the outer rim of the Lido.

They followed the beach. Before them rolled the waves of the dull-blue Adriatic, frothing and hissing as they swept upwards and then receded, leaving small shells and wisps of seaweed on the sand.

"What a bleak spot!" remarked Yelena. "I'm afraid it may be too cold for you here But I can guess what brought you to this spot."

"Cold!" Insarov replied, with a swift, bitter smile. "A fine soldier I'd make if I were afraid of the cold. As to what brought me here, I'll tell you. When I look at the sea from here I feel as if my country were nearer. It's over there, you know," he added, stretching out his arm eastwards. "And this wind comes from there."

"Don't you think this wind might bring the ship you are waiting for?" asked Yelena. "That white sail gleaming out there—can't it be she coming?"

Insarov peered into the distance, whither Yelena was pointing.

"Rendich promised to arrange everything for us in a week," he said. "I think we can rely on him. Have you heard, Yelena," he added, with sudden enthusiasm, "that the poor Dalmatian fishermen have contributed their plummets—those leaden weights, you know, that pull the nets down to the bottom—for bullets? They had no money, and fishing is their only livelihood; but they glad-

ly gave up their last possession, and now they are starving. What people!"

"*Aufgepasst!*" a haughty voice rang out behind them. There was a hollow clatter of hoofs, and an Austrian officer in a short grey tunic and green cap galloped past. They had barely time enough to step aside.

Insarov glowered after him.

"He is not to blame," said Yelena. "You know they have no other place here to train their horses."

"He is not to blame," said Insarov, "but he stirred up my blood with his cry, his moustache, his cap, his whole appearance. Let's go back."

"Yes, Dmitry. It *is* windy here. You didn't take good care of yourself after your Moscow illness, and had to pay for it in Vienna. Now you must be more careful."

Insarov made no answer, but the same bitter smile touched his lips.

"Shall we take a gondola down the Grand Canal?" Yelena continued. "We haven't seen Venice properly since we arrived. And tonight we are going to the theatre; I have two box tickets. They are giving a new opera, I understand. Shall we give this day to each other, forget all about politics, war, and everything else, except that we live and breathe and think together, that we are joined for ever? Shall we?"

"You want it, Yelena," replied Insarov, "therefore so do I."

"I knew you would," remarked Yelena with a smile. "Come along."

They went back to the gondola and told the gondolier to row them along the Grand Canal at a leisurely pace.

He who has not seen Venice in April can hardly have an idea of the ineffable charm of that magic town. A gentle and mild spring becomes Venice as a bright, sunny summer becomes magnificent Genoa, and as a golden and crimson autumn becomes that great veteran, Rome.

Like spring, the beauty of Venice both moves you and arouses desires; it tantalizes and excites an inexperienced heart like a promise of near and unenigmatic yet mysterious happiness. It is clear and obvious, and wrapped in the drowsy haze of an enamoured calm; it is mute and friendly, and feminine, even its name, and it is not mere chance that, of all towns, it alone has been named the *Beautiful*. The lofty palaces and churches are as light and marvellous as the beautiful dream of a young god; there is something fabulous, something captivatingly strange in the greenish-grey glitter and silky ripple of the dumb canal waves, in the noiseless skim of the gondolas, in the absence of the jarring sounds you hear in a town, of its rough knocking, its crashing, its din. "Venice is dying, Venice is deserted," its inhabitants tell you; but perhaps what it lacked before was this last charm, the charm of fading in the prime of triumphant beauty. He who has not seen it does not know; neither Canaletti nor Guardi, to say nothing of later painters, is capable of rendering that silvery softness of the air, that distance which is fleeing from you and yet so near, that fascinating harmony of the most delicate outlines and melting colours. He whose time is over, or whom life has defeated, should not visit Venice, for to him it will be as bitter as the memory of early dreams that never came true. But it will be sweet to him who is still full of vigour, who feels happy; let him bring his happiness under those enchanted skies, and however radiant it may be, Venice will add to it new, unfading splendour.

The gondola carrying Insarov and Yelena moved gently past the Riva degli Schiavoni, the Doge's Palace, the Piazzetta, and entered the Grand Canal. Marble palaces stretched along both sides: they seemed to float past, scarcely letting the eye take in and grasp their beauty. Yelena was deeply happy; there was but one dark cloud in the azure of her sky, and it was now trailing off.—In

sarov felt much better that day. They reached the steep arch of Rialto and turned back. Yelena was afraid the chilly churches might affect Insarov; then she recalled the Academy *delle Belle Arti* and told the gondolier to row them there. It did not take them long to go through the rooms of the little museum. Being neither connoisseurs nor dilettanti, they did not linger in front of every painting, did not force themselves to look; an airy gaiety had overcome them unexpectedly. They found everything very funny. (Children know that sensation well.) Yelena greatly scandalized three English visitors by laughing to tears at Tintoretto's St. Mark, who jumps from the heavens, as a frog might hop into the water, to rescue a slave from torture. Insarov, in his turn, was delighted with the back and calves of that stalwart individual in the green chlamys who stands in the foreground in Titian's *Assumption*, raising his arms aloft after the Madonna. But the Madonna herself—a beautiful, robust woman aspiring with calm majesty to her divine father—struck both Insarov and Yelena. They were also impressed with an austere holy painting by old Cima da Conegliano. As they were leaving the Academy, they glanced back once more at the Englishmen who were following them—with long hare teeth and dangling side-whiskers—and laughed; then they saw their gondolier in his short jacket and short trousers and laughed again; then they saw a market-woman with a little knot of grey hair on her very crown, and laughed louder than before. Lastly they looked into each other's faces, and burst out into uncontrollable laughter, and as soon as they had taken their seats in the gondola they clasped hands. They returned to the hotel, ran up to their room, and ordered dinner. Nor did their cheerful mood forsake them at table. They plied each other with food, drank to their Moscow friends, clapped their hands, praising the *cameriere* for the delicious fish he had served, and insisted that he should bring them

living *frutti di mare*.* The *cameriere* grinned and scraped, and upon coming out of their room shook his head, once he even whispered with a sigh, "*Poveretti!*" (Poor they!) After dinner they went to the theatre.

It was an opera by Verdi, a rather trivial thing, to be frank, but one that had already made the rounds of the European stages and that we Russians are also quite familiar with: *La Traviata*. The season was over in Venice, so that none of the singers rose above mediocrity, and each of them yelled as hard as he could. Violetta's role was performed by an obscure singer, none too well favoured, judging by the spectators' attitude, but not devoid of talent. She was a young, dark-eyed girl, not very good-looking, with a rather uneven and already spoiled voice. Her costume was poor and tasteless to naïveté; a red net held her hair, a frock of faded blue satin compressed her bosom, and a pair of thick suède gloves reached up to her pointed elbows. Indeed, how was she, the daughter of some Bergamo shepherd as likely as not, to know how Parisian camellias dressed! Nor did she know how to bear herself on the stage. Nevertheless, there was much sincerity and guileless simplicity in her acting, and she sang with that distinctive passionate expression and rhythm which none but the Italians can master. Yelena and Insarov sat by themselves in the dark box, close by the stage; the playful mood which had overcome them at the Academy *delle Belle Arti* was still there. When the father of the unfortunate youth, who was caught in the meshes of the temptress, appeared on the stage in a pea-colour tail-coat and tousled white wig, opened his mouth sideways, and let out an embarrassed and dismal bass *tremolo*, they could hardly keep back a titter. But Violetta's acting impressed them.

"That poor girl isn't getting any applause," said Ye-

* Sea food (Ital.).—*Tr.*

lena, "but I like her much better than some smug second-rate celebrity, who would be all frills and affectations, and would only be after effect. This one seems to be in no mood for jesting. Look, she doesn't notice the audience."

Insarov leant on the edge of the box to take a careful look at Violetta.

"She certainly isn't jesting," he said, "she senses death."

Yelena said no more.

The third act began. The curtain rose. Yelena started at sight of the bed, the drawn blinds, the medicine bottles, the screened lamp. She recalled her recent past. "What about the future?" it flashed upon her mind. "And the present?" It so happened that the actress's feigned cough was echoed in the box by the hollow, real cough of Insarov. Yelena stole a glance at him, and at once put on an expression of unperturbed calm; Insarov understood, and smiled as he softly hummed the song.

But presently he broke it off. Violetta's performance improved and grew less restrained as she went on. She discarded all that was extraneous and useless, and at last *found herself*—rare, supreme good fortune for an actor. She had suddenly crossed that boundary which cannot be described but beyond which lies beauty. The audience stirred, marvelling. A plain girl with a spoiled voice was taking possession of them, swaying them. But then her voice no longer sounded spoiled; it had gathered warmth and strength. Alfredo came; Violetta's joyous cry almost raised that storm known as *fanatismo*, against which our own Northern wailing is utterly colourless. The next moment the audience was still again. The duet began—the best item in the opera, one in which the composer has expressed all the regrets of a crazily wasted youth, the last struggle of a desperate and powerless love. Swept away and aloft by a surge of general sympathy, with tears of artistic joy and genuine suffer-

ing in her eyes, the singer yielded to the wave raising her, her face transformed, and before the terrible apparition of death, which had suddenly drawn near, the words "*Lasciami vivere... morir si giovane!*" (Let me live—to die so young!) broke from her lips with such vehement entreaty reaching to the very heavens that the hall rocked with furious applause and enthusiastic cries.

A chill swept over Yelena. She groped gently for Insarov's hand, found it, and pressed it firmly. He responded; but neither looked at the other. That grasp was not like the one they had exchanged in the gondola a few hours earlier.

They set out for the hotel along the Grand Canal. Night had fallen, bright and mellow. The same palaces moved up to meet them, but they looked different now. Those illumined by the moon loomed white, with a tinge of gold, and the details of ornament and the outlines of the windows and balconies dissolved, as it were, in that whiteness; they stood out more distinctly on the buildings submerged in the light pall of even shade. The gondolas with their little red lights seemed to skim along still more softly and quickly; mysteriously their iron beaks glinted in the darkness, mysteriously the oars rose and dropped above the silvery spangles of the ruffled stream; the gondoliers could be heard uttering a brief, low cry here and there (they do not sing nowadays); there were hardly any other sounds.

The hotel at which Insarov and Yelena had put up was in the Riva degli Schiavoni; they stepped out of the gondola before reaching the hotel and walked several times round St. Mark Plaza, under the arches where a multitude of idlers pressed in front of the tiny coffee-houses. It is an exquisite pleasure to stroll with the one you love among strangers in a foreign city, where everything seems wonderful and significant, where you wish everybody joy and peace, and that happiness of which you are

full yourself. But Yelena could no longer enjoy her happiness serenely; her heart, shaken by recent impressions, refused to calm down. As for Insarov, he pointed silently to the muzzles of Austrian guns protruding from under the low arches of the Doge's Palace, and pulled his hat down over his eyebrows. And as he was tired, they looked for the last time at St. Mark's Cathedral, at its domes, whose bluish lead flashed with phosphorescent spots in the moonlight, and walked slowly home.

Their room opened on a broad lagoon spreading between the Riva degli Schiavoni and the Giudecca. Almost opposite the hotel rose the pointed tower of San Giorgio; on the right, high up in the air, there glistened the golden ball of the Dogana, and Palladio's Redentore, one of the most beautiful churches on earth, stood dressed up like a bride. On the left the masts and rigging of the ships and the funnels of the steamers showed black; here and there a half-furled sail hung down like a huge wing, and the pennants scarcely moved. Insarov sat at the window, but Yelena did not let him admire the view for a long time; suddenly he developed fever, and a devouring weakness overcame him. She put him to bed and, when he had fallen asleep, went softly back to the window. How still and friendly the night was, what an innocent gentleness the azure air breathed—every suffering, every sorrow must abate and fall into slumber under that limpid sky, in those holy, innocent beams! "O God!" thought Yelena. "Why must there be death and separation and illness and tears? Or this beauty, this sweet sensation of hope, the soothing awareness of a safe refuge, reliable defence, eternal protection? What, then, is the meaning of this smiling sky that showers its blessings, of this happy, reposing earth? Can it be that all this is only in us, while outside is everlasting cold and silence? Can it be that we are alone—alone—and that everywhere else, in all those unfathomable abysses and depths, everything, absolutely

everything is alien to us? What good is, then, this longing for prayer and this joy of praying? (*'Morir si giovane!'* it rang in her heart.) Is it really impossible to placate, to avert it, to save him? Cannot I believe in a miracle?" She rested her head on her fists. "Is that all?" she whispered. "Can it really be all? I have been happy, not for minutes or hours or days, but for weeks on end. And by what right?" She was appalled by her happiness. "What if it is more than we may have?" she thought. "What if we must pay for it? For it has been heaven, while we are just human beings—poor, sinful human beings! *Morir si giovane!* Begone, O sinister apparition! It is not I alone who need his life!

"But what if this is a punishment? What if we must now pay complete retribution for our sin? My conscience was silent, it is silent even now, but is that proof of innocence? O God, are we really so criminal? Is it possible that thou who hast created this night, this sky, wilt punish us because we have loved each other? If that is so, if he is guilty, if I am guilty," she added, with passion, "then grant, O God, that we both die at last an honourable, a glorious death—there, in the fields of his country, and not here, not in this dark room.

"But what about the grief of a poor, lonely mother?" she asked herself, and was perplexed, finding no reply to her own query. She did not know that the happiness of every man is based on the unhappiness of another, that his advantage and convenience require the disadvantage and inconvenience of others just as a statue requires a pedestal.

"Rendich!" Insarov mumbled in his sleep.

Yelena tiptoed to his bed, bent over him, and mopped the sweat from his face. He tossed his head on the pillow for a while, and was still again.

She walked back to the window, and black thoughts took fresh hold of her. She tried to persuade and assure

herself that there was no reason for fear. She was even ashamed of her weakness. "There isn't any danger, is there? He is better now, isn't he?" she whispered. "Surely if we hadn't gone to the theatre nothing of the kind would have entered my head." Just then, high above the water, she saw a white sea-gull; it must have been frightened away by a fisherman, and it was flying silently, in a broken line, as though searching for a place to alight. "If it flies this way it will be a good omen," Yelena said to herself. The sea-gull circled, folded its wings, and dropped, with the plaintive cry of a wounded bird, far beyond a dark ship. Yelena started, then felt ashamed because she had started; without undressing, she lay down on the bed beside Insarov, who was breathing in frequent gasps.

XXXIV

Insarov awoke late, with a dull headache, and with what he called an atrocious weakness in all his limbs. Nevertheless, he got up.

"Has Rendich called yet?" was the first question he asked.

"Not yet," replied Yelena, handing him the latest issue of *L'Osservatore Triestino*, which wrote a great deal about the war, the Slav lands, and the principalities. Insarov began to read it, while she busied herself with making coffee for him. There was a knock at the door.

"Rendich," thought both of them, but the knocker said in Russian, "May I in?" Yelena and Insarov exchanged an astonished glance, and before they could answer, a smartly dressed man with a small, pointed face and quick little eyes stepped in. He was beaming as though he had just won a huge sum or received the most gratifying news.

Insarov rose from his chair.

"I see you don't recognize me," said the stranger, walking jauntily up to him and bowing courteously to Yelena. "I am Lupoyarov—remember we met in Moscow, at Y.'s?"

"Oh, yes, at Y.'s," said Insarov.

"That's right! Please introduce me to your wife. Madam, I have always had the greatest admiration for Dmitry Vasilyevich—Nikanor Vasilyevich, I mean"—he tried to correct himself—"and I'm happy to have at last the honour to make your acquaintance. Just imagine," he went on, turning to Insarov, "I didn't know you were here until last night. I'm staying at this hotel, too. What a city, Venice—it is sheer poetry! The only thing I hate in it is that you come across those accursed Austrians at every turn. Those Austrians! By the way, have you heard there was a decisive battle on the Danube? Three hundred Turkish officers killed, Silistria taken, Serbia has proclaimed her independence. I think as a patriot you must be delighted. My own Slav blood is boiling. Still, I'd suggest caution; I'm sure you are being watched. The city is swarming with spies. A shady character came up to me yesterday and asked if I was a Russian. I told him I was a Dane. But you must be ill, dear Nikanor Vasilyevich. You ought to take a course of treatment; Madam, you must see that your husband takes a course of treatment. Yesterday I rushed like a madman from palace to palace and from church to church—you have been at the Doge's Palace, haven't you? The luxury you see everywhere, especially in that large hall! And then Marino Faliero's place—it says in so many plain words: "*Decapitati pro criminibus.*"* I also visited the famous prisons. That's where indignation rose high in me—you may recall that I've always been concerned with social problems, and have rebelled against the aristocracy—I'd like

* Beheaded for his crimes.—*Tr.*

to send the defenders of aristocracy to those gaols. Byron was right when he said, 'I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs.' However, he was an aristocrat himself. I've always stood for progress. The young generation are all for progress. And what do you think of the British and French? We'll see how far they can go, *Boustrapa** and Palmerston. You know, Palmerston has become Prime Minister. Whatever you may say, you can't fool with the Russian fist. He's an awful rogue, is that *Boustrapa*! Shall I lend you *Les Châtiments de Victor Hugo*—it's amazing! '*L'avenir—le gendarme de Dieu.*' It's put a bit too boldly, but the force of it! Prince Vyazemsky didn't put it badly, either. 'Europe talks nothing but Başkadiklar,' he said, 'and watches Sinop hard.' I'm fond of poetry. I also have Proudhon's latest book—I have everything. I don't know about you, but I for one am glad about the war. I hope I shan't be called back to Russia, because I intend to go to Florence and Rome from here. I can't go to France, so I'm thinking of going to Spain—they say Spanish women are wonderful, although there's too much poverty and too many vermin there. I shouldn't mind trying California—there's nothing we Russians can't do—but I've promised an editor to make a thorough study of the problem of Mediterranean trade. You may say it's an uninteresting, a special subject, but we need specialists, we've had enough of philosophizing—what we need now is practice! But you look very ill, Nikanor Vasilyevich, perhaps I'm wearying you; but even so I'll stay with you a bit longer—"

Lupoyarov rambled on in the same manner for a long time, and before leaving he promised to come again.

Exhausted by the unexpected visit, Insarov lay down on the sofa.

"There goes your young generation!" he said bitterly,

* Napoleon III.—*Tr.*

glancing at Yelena. "Some put on airs and show off, but at bottom they are as much of a windbag as that gentleman."

Yelena did not argue; what worried her at the moment far more than the condition of the entire young generation of Russia was Insarov's weakness. She sat beside him and picked up her needlework. He had shut his eyes and lay motionless, looking very pallid and emaciated. Yelena looked at his sharpened features, at his outstretched arms, and a sudden fear clutched at her heart.

"Dmitry!" she called softly.

He stirred.

"Yes? Is Rendich here?"

"Not yet. But don't you think—you have fever, you don't look very well, really—don't you think I had better send for a doctor?"

"So that chatterbox has frightened you. I don't need a doctor. I'll rest a little, and everything will be all right. We shall go somewhere again in the afternoon."

Two hours passed. Insarov still lay on the sofa, but he could not sleep, though he did not open his eyes. Yelena stayed by his side; she had dropped her needlework on her lap, and sat motionless.

"Why can't you sleep?" she asked him finally.

"You just wait." He took her hand and pillowed his head on it. "There—that's fine. Wake me up the moment Rendich arrives. If he tells us the ship is ready to sail, we'll start at once. We must pack our things."

"It won't take long to pack," replied Yelena.

"Did you hear what that blathering fool said about fighting in Serbia?' said Insarov awhile later. "Made it all up, most likely. But we must go anyway. There's no time to lose. Be ready."

He fell asleep, and it was quite still in the room.

Yelena leant her head against the back of her armchair and gazed through the window. A wind had sprung

up, large white clouds sped across the sky, a slender mast swayed in the distance, and a long pennant with a red cross kept on fluttering and drooping. The pendulum of the old clock ticked strenuously, with a mournful wheeze. Yelena closed her eyes. She had had a bad night, and gradually she, too, dozed off.

She had a strange dream. She was boating with strangers on a Tsaritsyno pond. They sat there, silent and motionless, no one rowing; the boat was moving of its own accord. Yelena was not afraid but felt bored. She would have liked to know who those men were and why she was with them. As she looked the pond expanded, its banks disappeared, and it was no longer a pond but a restless sea. Huge azure billows rocked the boat with silent majesty; something terrible rose thundering from the bottom; her unfamiliar companions sprang up, shouting and waving their arms. Yelena recognized them—one of them was her father. But a white whirlwind swooped down on the billows—everything swirled and became embroiled.

Yelena looked round; it was still white all about her, but this time it was snow, endless snow. And she was no longer in a boat but was driving in a sleigh as she had done from Moscow; she was not alone, for beside her sat a little being wrapped in a shabby woman's coat. Yelena peered at her companion, and saw that it was Katya, her poor girl friend. Yelena was overcome with fear. "Why, isn't she dead?" she thought.

"Where are we going, Katya?"

Katya made no reply, and pulled her shabby coat round her—she was cold. Yelena was cold too. She peered ahead along the road, and through the snow-dust she saw a city. Tall white towers with silver tops. "Is that Moscow, Katya?" "No," thought Yelena, "that's Solovki Monastery, and there are many little narrow cells there, as in a beehive; they are narrow and stuffy, and

Dmitry is locked up inside. I must release him." Suddenly a grizzled, yawning abyss opened wide at her feet. The sleigh hurtled down, Katya laughed. "Yelena! Yelena!" came a voice from the abyss.

"Yelena!" it rang distinctly in her ears. She jerked up her head, turned, and her blood froze as she saw Insarov, white as snow—the snow of her dream—sitting up on the sofa and staring at her with big, bright, frightful eyes. His hair had tumbled over his forehead, his lips were strangely parted. His face, which had changed all of a sudden, expressed horror mingled with an anguished tenderness.

"Yelena," he said, "I'm dying."

With a shriek she slumped on her knees and clasped him to her breast.

"It's all over," said Insarov, "I'm dying. Farewell, my poor darling! Farewell, my homeland!"

He fell on his back.

Yelena ran out, calling for help, and the *cameriere* rushed off to fetch a doctor. Yelena clung to Insarov.

Just then a broad-shouldered, sunburnt man in a thick overcoat and low oilskin hat appeared in the doorway. He stopped short in perplexity.

"Rendich!" cried Yelena. "It's you! For goodness' sake see what is wrong—he has fainted! What's the matter with him? Oh, my God! Yesterday he went out, and only a moment ago he was speaking to me!"

Rendich said nothing, and stepped aside. A little man in a wig and spectacles whisked past him; it was the doctor, who lived in the same hotel. He approached Insarov.

"*Signora*," he said a few moments later, "the foreign gentleman is dead—*il signor forestiere è morto*—of aneurysm combined with a pulmonary disorder."

XXXV

Next day Rendich stood at the window of the same room. In front of him sat Yelena, wrapped in a shawl. Insarov lay in a coffin in the adjoining room. Yelena's face was both frightened and lifeless; there were two furrows between her eyebrows—they gave a tense look to her staring eyes. A letter from Anna Vasilyevna lay opened on the window-sill. She was calling her daughter back to Moscow for a month at least, complaining of solitude, and of Stakhov; she was sending her regards to Insarov and inquiring about his health, and begging him to let his wife go.

Rendich was a Dalmatian seaman, whom Insarov had met during his stay in Bulgaria and later found in Venice. He was a stern and coarse man, courageous and devoted to the Slav cause. He detested the Turks and hated the Austrians.

"How much longer must you stay in Venice?" Yelena asked him. Her voice was as lifeless as her face.

"We need one day to take the cargo without arousing suspicion, and then we'll head straight for Zara. It is bad news I'll bring to my countrymen. They'd been waiting for him since long ago, and placed their hopes in him."

"Placed their hopes in him," Yelena repeated mechanically.

"When are you going to bury him?" asked Rendich.

Yelena answered after a pause, "Tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? Then I'll stay. I want to throw a handful of earth into his grave. Besides, I must help you too. It's a pity he cannot rest in Slav earth."

Yelena looked at him.

"Captain," she said, "take me aboard with him, and take us across the sea, away from here. Can you do that?"

Rendich pondered.

"I can, only it won't be an easy matter. I shall have to

deal with the accursed authorities. But suppose we settle that, and bury him there. How am I to bring you back?"

"You won't have to bring me back."

"What! Where will you go, then?"

"I'll find some place, don't worry. Just take us—take me with you."

Rendich scratched his head.

"As you like, only it's a lot of trouble. I'll go and try. You wait here, I'll be back in two hours or so."

He left. Yelena walked into the adjoining room and, leaning against the wall, stood for a long time as though petrified. Then she sank on her knees, but was unable to pray. There was no reproach in her heart. She dared not ask God why he had not spared him, had had no mercy on him, had not preserved him, why he had punished him so much more than he deserved, if at all. Every one of us deserves this punishment by the very fact that he lives, and there is no great thinker, no benefactor of mankind, who may, in consideration of the useful things he does, claim the right to live. But Yelena could not pray—she had turned into stone.

That night a broad boat cast off from the hotel where the Insarovs had been staying. In the boat stood a long chest covered with black cloth, and beside it sat Yelena and Rendich. They sailed for nearly an hour, and finally came alongside a small two-master riding at anchor hard by the entrance to the harbour. Yelena and Rendich boarded the ship, and the sailors followed them with the chest. A gale rose after midnight, but by early morning the ship had passed the Lido. During the day the gale gathered tremendous force, and seasoned seamen in Lloyd's offices shook their heads, fearing the worst. The Adriatic between Venice, Triest, and the Dalmatian coast is extremely dangerous.

Some three weeks after Yelena had left Venice, Anna Vasilyevna received in Moscow the following letter:

"Dear Father and Mother, I am bidding you farewell for ever. You will never see me again. Dmitry died yesterday. Everything is finished for me. I am leaving for Zara today with his body. I shall bury him, and I have no idea what is to become of me. But I have no country now but D.'s. There is an uprising in the making there, and the people are preparing to fight. I shall work as a nurse, and tend the sick and wounded. I do not know what will become of me, but I shall remain faithful to D.'s memory and to the cause of his entire life even after his death. I have learned Bulgarian and Serbian. I shall probably not survive all this—so much the better. I have been brought to the brink of a precipice, and I must fall. It was no accident that fate joined us together; perhaps it is I who have killed him, and it is now his turn to drag me down. I have sought happiness, and I may find death. I suppose it is as it should be; it appears that I have sinned after all. But death covers up and reconciles everything, does it not? Forgive me for all the sorrow which I have caused you; I could not help it. And as to going back to Russia, why should I? What is there to do in Russia?

"Please accept my last kisses and blessing, and do not condemn me.

"Y."

Nearly five years have elapsed since, but there has been no more news of Yelena. All letters and inquiries proved fruitless. In vain Stakhov himself went to Venice and Zara after peace was concluded. In Venice he learnt what the reader knows, and in Zara no one could give him any specific information about Rendich and the ship he had chartered. There were vague rumours to the effect that, several years before, after a strong gale, the sea had washed ashore a coffin with the corpse of a man. Ac-

cording to other, more reliable sources, the coffin was not washed ashore at all, but was brought on land and buried near the shore by a foreign lady who had come from Venice. There were those who added that afterwards the lady had been seen in Herzegovina, with an army that was being formed; they even described her dress—black from head to foot. However it may have been, all trace of Yelena was lost irretrievably, and nobody knows whether she is still alive or in hiding, or whether the little game of life is finished, its light ferment over, and death has taken its toll. Sometimes, waking up, one asks oneself in fright, "Can it be that I'm already thirty—forty—fifty years old? How can life have passed so soon? How can death have drawn so near?" Death is like a fisherman who has netted a fish and keeps it in the water for a while; the fish is still swimming, but it is enmeshed, and the fisherman will haul it out when he pleases.

What became of the other characters in this story?

Anna Vasilyevna still lives; she has aged very noticeably since the misfortune which befell her; she complains less, and feels melancholy much more often. Stakhov has aged too, and has parted with Augustina Christianovna. Nowadays he criticizes all that is foreign. His house-keeper, a handsome Russian woman of about thirty, wears silk dresses and gold rings and earrings. Kurnatovsky, being a temperamental character and, in his capacity of a vigorous dark-haired man, having a penchant for pretty blondes, has married Zoya, who has become so obedient that she has even ceased to think in German. Bersenev is in Heidelberg; sent abroad at state expense, he has visited Berlin and Paris, and has not been wasting his time. He will make an able professor. The learned public have taken note of two of his articles: "On Certain Pecu-

larities of Old German Law in the Case of Judicial Punishment" and "On the Importance of the Urban Principle in Civilization." It is a pity, however, that both articles are written in a rather ponderous style, and bristle with foreign terms. Shubin is in Rome. He has devoted himself entirely to his art, and is held to be one of the most noteworthy and promising young sculptors. Rigid purists believe that he has not made a sufficient study of ancient sculpture and lacks "style," and class him in the French school. He receives lots of orders from Englishmen and Americans. His *Bacchante* has made quite a stir lately, and the Russian count Boboshkin, a very wealthy man, was about to buy it for 1,000 scudi, but preferred to pay 3,000 scudi to another sculptor, a Frenchman *pur sang*, for a work representing *A Young Village Maiden Dying of Love on the Breast of the Genius of Spring*. Shubin writes an occasional letter to Uvar Ivanovich, who is the only one not to have changed a jot. "Do you remember," he wrote to him not so long ago, "what you said to me that night when we learned about poor Yelena's marriage, and I sat on your bed chatting with you? Do you remember I asked you whether we should ever have real men in Russia? You answered me: 'They'll come yet.' O black-earth force! Once again I ask you from here—from this 'beautiful far-off': 'Well, Uvar Ivanovich, shall we have them?'"

Uvar Ivanovich twiddled his fingers, and gazed enigmatically into the distance.

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He will always be—along with the poet Pushkin, for whom he had the greatest admiration, the poet Lermontov, and the novelist Gogol—one of those to whom Russia owes deep and everlasting gratitude, for he has given her people something undying and invaluable: his art, unforgettable works, a glory more precious and durable than any other glory.

Guy de Maupassant